

Ball State University African American Alumni Oral History Project

An Honors Thesis (HONR ^{390c}~~499~~)

by

Kristal All

Thesis Advisor
Dr. Michael Doyle

Ball State University
Muncie, Indiana

April 2015

Expected Date of Graduation:

May 2016

Ball State University African American Alumni Oral History Project

An Honors Thesis (HONR ^{390c}~~499~~)

by

Kristal All

Thesis Advisor
Dr. Michael Doyle

Ball State University
Muncie, Indiana

April 2015

Expected Date of Graduation:

May 2016

SpColl
Undergrad
Thesis
LD
2489
.24
2016
.A45

Abstract

Muncie, Indiana is one of the most studied American cities in history. For nearly a century, it has been examined as representation of general life in the United States, based on its location, population, size, and values. But in most of the research about Muncie excludes much analysis on the minority population within the city. The voices of African Americans have not been shared enough; but everyone deserves to be heard. This thesis demonstrates my work as a part of a larger oral history project that captures some of the viewpoints and experiences of African Americans who attended, worked, and/or taught at Ball State University. Through two oral history interviews, I attempt to fill in the gaps of an ignored culture within a public higher education institution that regards itself as representative of most institutions. I interviewed Teresa Jeter, alumna and former professor in the College of Architecture and Planning, and Charles Payne, who taught Multicultural Education at Ball State University for forty-one years and helped develop the Office of Institutional Diversity.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr. Michael Doyle for organizing this whole project. Because of his dedication and perseverance with this oral history project, the recorded history of Ball State University is now more inclusive and accurate.

I would like to give special thanks to Teresa Jeter and Charles Payne. My interviews would be useless without their openness and willingness to share events of their past to educate the future. I appreciate their support in making history come to life with every story they told.

I would also like to thank all of the other members of the Ball State University African American Alumni Oral History Project. This was a collaborative effort, and everyone deserves recognition for his or her hard work.

Ball State University African American Alumni Oral History Project

Kristal All

Table of Contents

Abstract	1
Acknowledgements	2
Author's Statement	5
Research and Preparation	6
Interview Process	9
Transcriptions	11
Project Showcase	12
Conclusion	13
Bibliography	15
"So Our Histories Do Not Die" Documentary	16
Teresa Jeter Interview Portfolio	17
Preparation and Interview Checklist	18
Biographical Information Form	20
Professional Resume of Teresa Jeter	22
Civil Rights Timeline	28
Thank You Card	33
Interview Questions	34
DVD Video of Interview	39
Interview Transcription	1-35
Charles Payne Interview Portfolio	40
Preparation and Interview Checklist	41

Biographical Information Form	43
Daily News Article	46
Thank You Card	49
Interview Questions	50
DVD Video of Interview	56
Interview Transcription	1-38

Author's Statement

This thesis is part of a larger oral history project that documents the personal accounts and experiences of African American alumni of Ball State University. As the project went on, the interviewees expanded from the initial goal of alumni who attended the University between 1950 and 2000, to black alumni and long-term faculty members associated with Ball State as recently as 2009. The purpose of the project was to record the viewpoints, reflections, and stories of these alumni, faculty, and professional staff members in order to add to the overall history of Ball State University. These oral history interviews will enhance what is known about the distinctive experiences of people of color at Ball State when the next definitive history is written. My interviews will be added to the Digital Media Repository in the University's archives to help counter the dearth of information about people of color presented in the University's current historical record.

My final contribution to the project is a portfolio of information related to two oral history interviews I conducted. I researched the institution and the community in which it is based in the initial stage of the process. Next, I studied collective African American experiences during and after the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. After contacting each interviewee, I superimposed their personal timeline upon points of interest in history in order to generate a localized, specific set of questions that would draw out each interviewee's accounts of their lives and experiences. I conducted a full-life interview with each interviewee, and each interview exceeded ninety minutes in length. I also served as videographer for two other interviews of the project, one lasting an hour and a half, and the other lasting two and a half hours. Following the interviews, I prepared verbatim transcripts that are keyword searchable in order to be easily accessible for future projects and research. My preparatory research, the videos of the two

interviews I conducted, both of the transcripts of the interviews, and a behind-the-scenes project documentary video are included in my overall portfolio. The videos have been authored to DVD form, and they, along with the transcripts and supplemental work I did during the project are included in this thesis portfolio.

Research & Preparation

To prepare for my interviews, I had to research an abundant amount of information. I started by learning everything I could about the University. I read *Ball State University: An Interpretive History* by Anthony Edmonds and Bruce Geelhoed, which gave relevant facts and connections about the foundation and progress of Ball State throughout the years.¹ The authors highlight important founders and figures of the institution, and the text is a balanced interpretation that provided an unjaudiced view of various aspects of the administration, policies, and programs of Ball State. Knowing the University's timeline was crucial in preparing to interview alumni who attended Ball State decades ago. Unfortunately, this text did not account for the growing cultural diversity at Ball State. It neglected to capture the voices of African American students, which therefore makes it difficult to ascertain what college life was like for people of color attending school here.

In order to try to understand what life in Muncie was like for African Americans, I then read *The Other Side of Middletown: Exploring Muncie's African American Community* by Luke Eric Lassiter et al.² This informative text incorporated many individual stories that helped describe a general culture among African American citizens in Muncie. The book follows the same format as the original Middletown study and publication by Robert and Helen Lynd in the

¹ Anthony Edmonds and Bruce Geelhoed, *Ball State University: An Interpretive History* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2001).

² Luke Eric Lassiter et al., *The Other Side of Middletown: Exploring Muncie's African American Community* (Oxford, UK: AltaMira Press, 2004).

1920s, but the research presented in *The Other Side of Middletown* details life in Muncie for African Americans. I later discovered that one of my interviewees, Teresa Jeter, was closely connected with the book because her father, a prominent man in the community, was mentioned in the book. This resource helped me understand the experiences and attitudes of people of color who had some formal relationship with Ball State University, as well as about the community in which the University is based. It provided more of what *Ball State University: An Interpretive History* was lacking, yet it still did not provide full, individual accounts of life of undergraduate and graduate students of color. The Ball State University African American Alumni Oral History Project was designed to do exactly that. The interviews I conducted incorporated factual information from these texts and connected it with individual accounts that help provide a more accurate and inclusive history of the University and its students.

Having no prior experience conducting oral history interviews, I relied on the expertise of Donald Ritchie's handbook, *Doing Oral History*.³ Styled in a question-and-answer format, I was able to learn about the purposes, requirements of, and advice for conducting oral history interviews. I learned from this book how to formulate questions, establish rapport between the interviewee and myself and prepare before, during, and after an interview.

I also took part in Dr. Michael Doyle's Oral History Methods Workshop, which condensed the most important aspects of *Doing Oral History* into manageable sections. This was beneficial for me as a novice oral historian, and I thus learned what needed to be done for this specific project, from contacting interviewees and conducting research to creating interview questions and maintaining a professional demeanor throughout the project.

³ Donald Ritchie, *Doing Oral History*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

Since this Oral History Project centered on African American experiences, stories, and histories, I did a lot of research about black history. The other members of the oral history project and I went to the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History in Detroit, Michigan, where I learned more about African American culture and struggles over time. This experience helped me emotionally connect with the stuff of history; there were artifacts, photographs, paintings, and displays that brought the information to life. I focused in particular on learning more about the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and its aftermath, knowing that historical context around my interviewees' lives would help me frame my questions to ascertain how they reacted to the events. At the time of the trip, however, I did not yet know who I would interview, so I was not able to connect what I discovered about black history to specific people and a narrow timeline.



Part of the BBC Fellows Immersive Learning Showcase display featuring members of the project at the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History

Another source of information about black history and the lasting impact of the Civil Rights Movement came in the form of a documentary series made in 2013, *The African Americans: Many Rivers to Cross with Henry Louis Gates, Jr.*⁴ This series reiterated much of the information I had previously learned, but it also added emotion to the history. With more pictures, videos, and analysis of the events, the series was enlightening to more of the challenges that African Americans have faced. While I still did not yet know whom I would interview at the time I watched the documentary series, I found it useful in continuing to shape my understanding of African American history. I learned about key players and other events of the Civil Rights Movement that I never knew about. All of the information I gathered about Ball State University, Muncie, African American history, and conducting oral history interviews proved valuable when I began individualized research for conducting interviews.

Interview Process

The first interview I conducted was with Teresa Jeter. Ms. Jeter attended Ball State from 1971 to 1975, but left just short of earning her bachelor's degree in nursing. She returned to Ball State and became a Master of Urban and Regional Planning in 1995. Knowing this information, I restudied the events and people of Ball State and Muncie to formulate questions that would connect Ms. Jeter to the events and allow her the chance to share her perspective. I divided my questions into logical sections. The first section focused on her early life, family relationships, and elementary school experiences. I then asked questions about her high school experience, slowly leading into questions about racial tension and discrimination. I had sets of questions for each stage of her collegiate career, then closing questions about her views of the progress of Ball State and the impact and future impact of the Civil Rights Movement. Although the natural

⁴ Henry Louis Gates, Jr., *The African Americans: Many Rivers to Cross with Henry Louis Gates, Jr.* directed by Sabin Streeter (2013; PBS.), DVD.

conversation of the interview did not follow the exact order of my prepared questions, we spoke about all the topics and Ms. Jeter gave wonderful insight into the history of the University. She was satisfied with her education and shared that she did not face frequent prejudice while in college. Her story is key in contributing to the wide range of voices and experiences that African American students had at Ball State.



Teresa Jeter – Master of Urban and Regional Planning (1995)

Conversely, when I interviewed Dr. Charles Payne, a retired director of the Office of Institutional Diversity and multicultural education professor who taught at Ball State for forty-one years, he shared a darker side of prejudice and racism he experienced. Dr. Payne was born and raised in Mississippi, where he grew up knowing the racial differences that caused other people to treat him badly. Even at Ball State he experienced backlash from other professors who did not trust him or the Multicultural Education program that he helped create. Dr. Payne's testimony aligned well with the factual information in Edmonds and Geelhoed's book; Dr. Payne knew the members of the administration over the years, and he helped explain the attitudes and

ideas of people at Ball State throughout the second half of the 20th century. His narrative was also crucial in filling in the forgotten perspective of people in Ball State University's history.



Charles Payne – Professor and Assistant Provost for Diversity;
Director of Office of Institutional Diversity (1972-2013)

Transcriptions

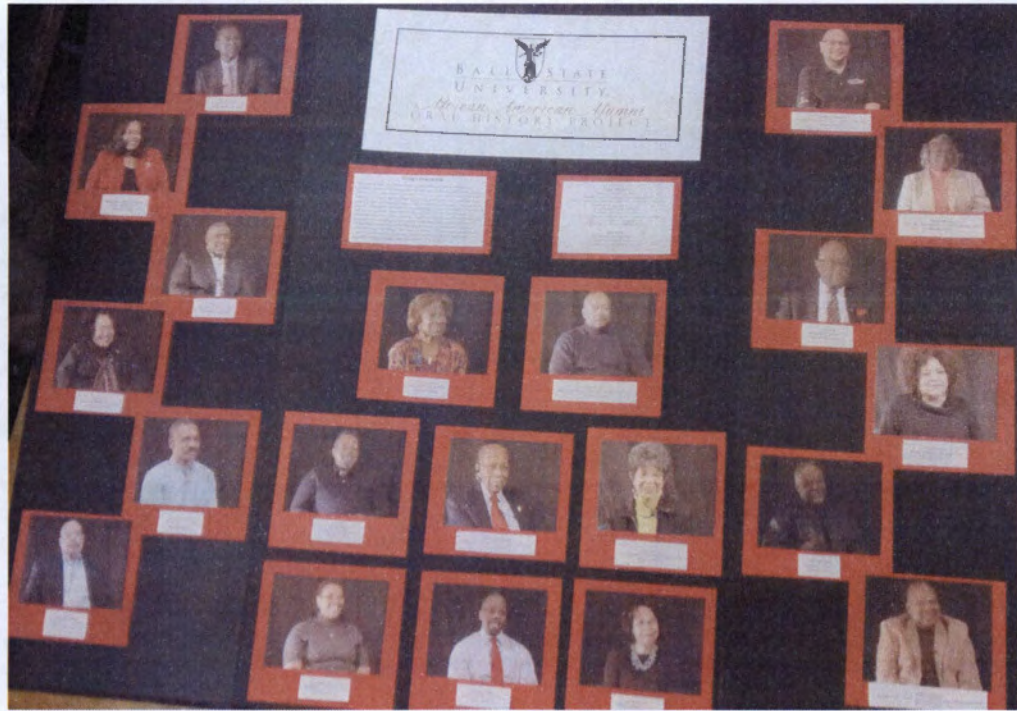
The next stage of the oral history process was transcribing the interviews. Each interview required over ten hours to transcribe verbatim. I worked on this over the course of three weeks. Although my transcribing skills and speed increased over time, I still struggled to get each interview right. This involved adhering to the *Baylor University Institute for Oral History Style Guide: A Quick Reference for Editing Oral History Transcripts* as I worked.⁵ I styled the interviews following those rules, which were clear and consistent. For some words, however, I chose to format them the way the speaker pronounced them instead of how the Baylor Guide suggested in Standard American English. The dialect was more important than editing for

⁵ *Baylor University Institute for Oral History Style Guide: A quick Reference for Editing Oral History Transcripts* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Institute for Oral History, 2015)

correctness. For example, I left words such as “gonna” instead of changing them to “going to.” My drafts of the transcriptions are the most important parts of my portfolio for the project, but they will be reviewed and revised by more copy editors before being permanently archived the Ball State University Libraries’ Digital Media Repository for future researchers to access and use.

Project Showcase

As part of the Ball State University African American Alumni Oral History Project, we worked with Building Better Communities (BBC) to fund and conduct the project and visit to the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History. The BBC organization advocates for community outreach and engagement, so they helped us meet our project goals and leave a positive impact on the University and community. Each of the members of the oral history project became BBC Fellows under the supervision of our faculty mentor Michael Doyle. Near the end of the project, I helped present our work at the semi-annual Building Better Communities Fellows Immersive Learning Showcase. I helped create a display depicting all twenty of the interviewees; it was professional, informative, and representative of the effort we put into the project as a whole. Also on display was a laptop showing a three-minute documentary about our project created by BBC staff. At the Showcase, I networked with members of the Ball State and Muncie community to tell them about the project and the work that went into it. Most of the people I talked to recognized some of the interviewees from the display, and everyone said they were interested in our project. I was able to promote the interviews and answer questions about the project, and it made me proud to see that all of my hard work was being recognized.



Display poster at the BBC Fellows Immersive Learning Showcase

Conclusion

As part of this project, I developed my own communication, research, and writing skills, and I am excited to share this fascinating history with others. The interviews, transcriptions, research, and artifacts I gathered will remain in the public record of Ball State University, and I am glad to have been able to help African American alumni share their stories. The effort I participated in represents the first phase of a two-phase project conducted by Dr. Michael Doyle that anticipates twenty more oral history interviews leading up to the centennial anniversary of Ball State. As this oral history project is expanded in the future, my work will always be part of a strong foundational layer of interviews that show the historical record of people of color at Ball State University. Through my work on this project, I developed transferrable skills in conducting historical research, long-form interviewing, audio and video recording, transcribing, compilation and presentation of findings in a professional setting, teamwork, and project promotion. I am

very proud of all that I accomplished through this project, and am glad to have to opportunity to contribute to a more inclusive history of Ball State University.

Bibliography

Baylor University Institute for Oral History Style Guide: A Quick Reference for Editing Oral

History Transcripts. Waco, TX: Baylor University Institute for Oral History, 2015

Edmonds, Anthony and Bruce Geelhoed. *Ball State University: An Interpretive History*.

Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2001.

Henry Louis Gates, Jr. *The African Americans: Many Rivers to Cross with Henry Louis Gates,*

Jr. Directed by Sabin Streeter. 2013. PBS, DVD.

Lassiter, Luke Eric et al. *The Other Side of Middletown: Exploring Muncie's African American*

Community. Oxford, UK: AltaMira Press, 2004.

Ritchie, Donald. *Doing Oral History*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015.

Teresa Jeter Interview Portfolio

Ball State University African American Alumni Oral History Project

Kristal All

Kristal All

April 23, 2015

HONR 390 Oral History Workshop

Ball State University African-American Alumni Oral History Project

Dr. Michael Doyle

**Preparation and Interview Checklist for Oral History Interview with
Teresa Jeter on 21 March 2015, Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana**

- Biographical Information Form
 - o As this was my first oral history interview I have ever conducted on my own, I thought it wise to start at the beginning. I used the Biographical Information Form to create a general map of Teresa Jeter's life, academic path, and career. When creating questions, I made sure to focus on aspects from each stage in her life. I used this information to look into the other colleges she attended and the major projects she took part in. I was able to deeply explore some of her Urban Development successes and some of the organizations she was a part of during her time at Ball State. This form helped me maintain a structure for my research that was useful before and during the interview.
- Civil Rights Timeline by Borgna Brunner and Elissa Haney, courtesy of Pearson Education
 - o <http://www.ballstatedaily.com/article/2013/06/ball-state-diversity-advocate-retires-looks-back-on-career>
 - o I used this timeline to incorporate major Civil Rights events into the timeline of Ms. Jeter's life, formulating questions about her participation in the Movement

and her reactions to events that occurred. Since Teresa Jeter spent most of her life in Muncie, I used what I knew about Muncie's and Ball State's history, I was able to create a useful system of categorizing my questions to draw out stories and reactions to history.

- Questions for Oral History Interview with Teresa Jeter
 - o This is my full set of questions I used during my interview with Teresa Jeter. They range from the beginning of her life to her thoughts on the future of Ball State and Muncie, family values and educational perspective, and reflections on interactions between people, ideas, and events. I grouped my questions around each major part of her life, incorporating research from my course work, individual research about other aspects of her life, and information from her Biographical Information Form.
- Thank-you note to Teresa Jeter
 - o In this note I showed my appreciation for Jeter's support in the project, expressed how her stories are positively influential, and informed her of the next phase of the project. I wrote this note after the interview was finished and I reflected on everything we had discussed.
- Transcript of the Oral History Interview with Teresa Jeter
 - o This is a complete verbatim transcript of the interview I conducted with Teresa Jeter.

U.S.

| Share

Civil Rights Timeline

Milestones in the modern civil rights movement

by Borgna Brunner and Elissa Haney

1948 1954 1960 1967 1968 1971 1988 1991 2005 2008 2009 2013

1948 July 26

President Truman signs Executive Order 9811, which states, "It is hereby declared to be the policy of the President that there shall be equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the armed services without regard to race, color, religion, or national origin."

1954 May 17

The Supreme Court rules on the landmark case *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kans.*, unanimously agreeing that segregation in public schools is unconstitutional. The ruling paves the way for large-scale desegregation. The decision overturns the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* ruling that sanctioned "separate but equal" segregation of the races, ruling that "separate educational facilities are inherently unequal." It is a victory for NAACP attorney Thurgood Marshall, who will later return to the Supreme Court as the nation's first black justice.



Top

1955 Aug.

Fourteen-year-old Chicagoan Emmett Till is visiting family in Mississippi when he is kidnapped, brutally beaten, shot, and dumped in the Tallahatchie River for allegedly whistling at a white woman. Two white men, J. W. Milam and Roy Bryant, are arrested for the murder and acquitted by an all-white jury. They later boast about committing the murder in a *Look* magazine interview. The case becomes a cause célèbre of the civil rights movement.

Dec. 1

(Montgomery, Ala.) NAACP member Rosa Parks refuses to give up her seat at the front of the "colored section" of a bus to a white passenger, defying a southern custom of the time. In response to her arrest the Montgomery black community launches a bus boycott, which will last for more than a year, until the buses are desegregated Dec. 21, 1956. As newly elected president of the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA), Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., is instrumental in leading the boycott.

Top



SOURCE: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

1957 Jan.-Feb.

Martin Luther King, Charles K. Steele, and Fred L. Shuttlesworth establish the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, of which King is made the first president. The SCLC becomes a major force in organizing the civil rights movement and bases its principles on nonviolence and civil disobedience. According to King, it is essential that the civil rights movement not sink to the level of the racists and hatemongers who oppose them: "We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline," he urges.

Sept.

(Little Rock, Ark.) Formerly all-white Central High School learns that integration is easier said than done. Nine black students are blocked from entering the school on the orders of Governor Orval Faubus. President Eisenhower sends federal troops and the National Guard to intervene on behalf of the students, who become known as the "Little Rock Nine."

infoplease tools

[Calculator](#)
[Spelling Checker](#)
[Place Finder](#)
[Distance Calculator](#)
[Periodic Table](#)
[Conversion Tool](#)
[Perpetual Calendar](#)
[Year by Year](#)
[Fact Monster](#)

**1960 Feb. 1**

(Greensboro, N.C.) Four black students from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical College begin a sit-in at a segregated Woolworth's lunch counter. Although they are refused service, they are allowed to stay at the counter. The event triggers many similar nonviolent protests throughout the South. Six months later the original four protesters are served lunch at the same Woolworth's counter. Student sit-ins would be effective throughout the Deep South in integrating parks, swimming pools, theaters, libraries, and other public facilities.

April

(Raleigh, N.C.) The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) is founded at Shaw University, providing young blacks with a place in the civil rights movement. The SNCC later grows into a more radical organization, especially under the leadership of Stokely Carmichael (1966–1967).

[Top](#)

1961 May 4

Over the spring and summer, student volunteers begin taking bus trips through the South to test out new laws that prohibit segregation in interstate travel facilities, which includes bus and railway stations. Several of the groups of "freedom riders," as they are called, are attacked by angry mobs along the way. The program, sponsored by The Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), involves more than 1,000 volunteers, black and white.

1962**Oct. 1**

James Meredith becomes the first black student to enroll at the University of Mississippi. Violence and riots surrounding the incident cause President Kennedy to send 5,000 federal troops.

**1963 April 16**

Martin Luther King is arrested and jailed during anti-segregation protests in Birmingham, Ala.; he writes his seminal "Letter from Birmingham Jail," arguing that individuals have the moral duty to disobey unjust laws.

May

During civil rights protests in Birmingham, Ala., Commissioner of Public Safety Eugene "Bull" Connor uses fire hoses and police dogs on black demonstrators. These images of brutality, which are televised and published widely, are instrumental in gaining sympathy for the civil rights movement around the world.

June 12

(Jackson, Miss.) Mississippi's NAACP field secretary, 37-year-old Medgar Evers, is murdered outside his home. Byron De La Beckwith is tried twice in 1964, both trials resulting in hung juries. Thirty years later he is convicted for murdering Evers.

Aug. 28

(Washington, D.C.) About 200,000 people join the March on Washington. Congregating at the Lincoln Memorial, participants listen as Martin Luther King delivers his famous "I Have a Dream" speech.

Sept. 15

(Birmingham, Ala.) Four young girls (Denise McNair, Cynthia Wesley, Carole Robertson, and Addie Mae Collins) attending Sunday school are killed when a bomb explodes at the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, a popular location for civil rights meetings. Riots erupt in Birmingham, leading to the deaths of two more black youths.



[Top](#)

1964 Jan. 23

The 24th Amendment abolishes the poll tax, which originally had been instituted in 11 southern states after Reconstruction to make it difficult for poor blacks to vote.

Summer

The Council of Federated Organizations (COFO), a network of civil rights groups that includes CORE and SNCC, launches a massive effort to register black voters during what becomes known as the Freedom Summer. It also sends delegates to the Democratic National Convention to protest—and attempt to unseat—the official all-white Mississippi contingent.

July 2

President Johnson signs the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The most sweeping civil rights legislation since Reconstruction, the Civil Rights Act prohibits discrimination of all kinds based on race, color, religion, or national origin. The law also provides the federal government with the powers to enforce desegregation.

Aug. 4

(Neshoba County, Miss.) The bodies of three civil-rights workers—two white, one black—are found in an earthen dam, six weeks into a federal investigation backed by President Johnson. James E. Chaney, 21; Andrew Goodman, 21; and Michael Schwerner, 24, had been working to register black voters in Mississippi, and, on June 21, had gone to investigate the burning of a black church. They were arrested by the police on speeding charges, incarcerated for several hours, and then released after dark into the hands of the Ku Klux Klan, who murdered them.

**1965 Feb. 21**

(Harlem, N.Y.) Malcolm X, black nationalist and founder of the Organization of Afro-American Unity, is shot to death. It is believed the assailants are members of the Black Muslim faith, which Malcolm had recently abandoned in favor of orthodox Islam.

March 7

(Selma, Ala.) Blacks begin a march to Montgomery in support of voting rights but are stopped at the Pettus Bridge by a police blockade. Fifty marchers are hospitalized after police use tear gas, whips, and clubs against them. The incident is dubbed "Bloody Sunday" by the media. The march is considered the catalyst for pushing through the voting rights act five months later.

**Aug. 10**

Congress passes the Voting Rights Act of 1965, making it easier for Southern blacks to register to vote. Literacy tests, poll taxes, and other such requirements that were used to restrict black voting are made illegal.

Aug. 11–17, 1965

(Watts, Calif.) Race riots erupt in a black section of Los Angeles.

Sept. 24, 1965

Asserting that civil rights laws alone are not enough to remedy discrimination, President Johnson issues Executive Order 11246, which enforces affirmative action for the first time. It requires government contractors to "take affirmative action" toward prospective minority employees in all aspects of hiring and employment.



Top

1966 Oct.

(Oakland, Calif.) The militant Black Panthers are founded by Huey Newton and Bobby Seale.

**1967 April 19**

Stokely Carmichael, a leader of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), coins the

phrase "black power" in a speech in Seattle. He defines it as an assertion of black pride and "the coming together of black people to fight for their liberation by any means necessary." The term's radicalism alarms many who believe the civil rights movement's effectiveness and moral authority crucially depend on nonviolent civil disobedience.

June 12

In *Loving v. Virginia*, the Supreme Court rules that prohibiting interracial marriage is unconstitutional. Sixteen states that still banned interracial marriage at the time are forced to revise their laws.

July

Major race riots take place in Newark (July 12–16) and Detroit (July 23–30).

1968 April 4

(Memphis, Tenn.) Martin Luther King, at age 39, is shot as he stands on the balcony outside his hotel room. Escaped convict and committed racist James Earl Ray is convicted of the crime.

April 11

President Johnson signs the Civil Rights Act of 1968, prohibiting discrimination in the sale, rental, and financing of housing.



1971 April 20

The Supreme Court, in *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education*, upholds busing as a legitimate means for achieving integration of public schools. Although largely unwelcome (and sometimes violently opposed) in local school districts, court-ordered busing plans in cities such as Charlotte, Boston, and Denver continue until the late 1990s.

[Top](#)

1988 March 22

Overriding President Reagan's veto, Congress passes the Civil Rights Restoration Act, which expands the reach of non-discrimination laws within private institutions receiving federal funds.

1991 Nov. 22

After two years of debates, vetoes, and threatened vetoes, President Bush reverses himself and signs the Civil Rights Act of 1991, strengthening existing civil rights laws and providing for damages in cases of intentional employment discrimination.

[Top](#)

1992 April 29

(Los Angeles, Calif.) The first race riots in decades erupt in south-central Los Angeles after a jury acquits four white police officers for the videotaped beating of African American Rodney King.

2003 June 23

In the most important affirmative action decision since the 1978 *Bakke* case, the Supreme Court (5–4) upholds the University of Michigan Law School's policy, ruling that race can be one of many factors considered by colleges when selecting their students because it furthers "a compelling interest in obtaining the educational benefits that flow from a diverse student body."

(See also: Affirmative Action Timeline.)

[Top](#)

2005 June 21

The ringleader of the Mississippi civil rights murders (see Aug. 4, 1964), Edgar Ray Killen, is convicted of manslaughter on the 41st anniversary of the crimes.

October 24

Rosa Parks dies at age 92.

2006 January 30

Coretta Scott King dies of a stroke at age 78.

2007 February

Emmett Till's 1955 murder case, reopened by the Department of Justice in 2004, is officially closed. The two confessed murderers, J. W. Milam and Roy Bryant, were dead of cancer by 1994, and prosecutors lacked sufficient evidence to pursue further convictions.

May 10

James Bonard Fowler, a former state trooper, is indicted for the murder of Jimmie Lee Jackson 40 years after Jackson's death. The 1965 killing led to a series of historic civil rights protests in Selma, Ala.

2008 January

Senator Edward Kennedy (D-MA) introduces the Civil Rights Act of 2008. Some of the proposed provisions include ensuring that federal funds are not used to subsidize discrimination, holding employers accountable for age discrimination, and improving accountability for other violations of civil rights and workers' rights.

[Top](#)

2009 January

In the Supreme Court case *Ricci v. DeStefano*, a lawsuit brought against the city of New Haven, 18 plaintiffs—17 white people and one Hispanic—argued that results of the 2003 lieutenant and captain exams were thrown out when it was determined that few minority firefighters qualified for advancement. The city claimed they threw out the results because they feared liability under a disparate-impact statute for issuing tests that discriminated against minority firefighters. The plaintiffs claimed that they were victims of reverse discrimination under the Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The Supreme Court ruled (5–4) in favor of the firefighters, saying New Haven's "action in discarding the tests was a violation of Title VII."

[Top](#)

2013 June

In *Shelby County v. Holder*, the Supreme Court struck down Section 4 of the Voting Rights Act, which established a formula for Congress to use when determining if a state or voting jurisdiction requires prior approval before changing its voting laws. Currently under Section 5 of the act nine—mostly Southern—states with a history of discrimination must get clearance from Congress before changing voting rules to make sure racial minorities are not negatively affected. While the 5–4 decision did not invalidate Section 5, it made it toothless. Chief Justice John Roberts said the formula Congress now uses, which was written in 1965, has become outdated. "While any racial discrimination in voting is too much, Congress must ensure that the legislation it passes to remedy that problem speaks to current conditions," he said in the majority opinion. In a strongly worded dissent, Judge Ruth Bader Ginsburg said, "Hubris is a fit word for today's demolition of the V.R.A." (Voting Rights Act).

[Top](#)

Related Links

Black History Month Features
 "I Have a Dream" Speech
 Letter from Birmingham Jail
 Notable Speeches and Letters by African Americans
 Assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.
 Martin Luther King, Jr.
 Civil Rights Leaders
 Quiz: Civil Rights Heroes (for Kids)
 Black History Month
 African American History Timeline
 Civil Rights Cases Reopened
 Civil Rights

[More Timelines](#)

Kristal All

April 23, 2015

HONR 390 Oral History Workshop

Ball State University African-American Alumni Oral History Project

Dr. Michael Doyle

Questions for Oral History Interview with Teresa Jeter on 21 March 2015,

Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana

Hello, my name is Kristal All. Today's date is March 21, 2015, and I am interviewing Teresa Jeter on the Ball State campus as part of the Ball State University African American Alumni Oral History Project.

Beginning through Grade School

- Thanks for coming. How are you?
- So when and where were you born?
- Do you have any siblings?
- Describe your parents' home as a child. What was your family dynamic?
- Did you have any family traditions? How about now?
- Who or what inspires you the most?
- Who would you credit to shaping your personality and character the most?
- To what extent did your family value education?
- Where did you go to grade school?
- What was that like?

- By the time you started school, public schools were integrated. How much diversity did your school have?
- Did you experience any discrimination in elementary school?

High School and Race

- Where did you attend high school?
- Did you experience discrimination then?
- Were you involved in any latchkey programs or extracurricular activities?
- Black teachers weren't hired in Muncie schools until after 1954 (L: 139). Did you have any black teachers at Muncie Central?
- What do you remember about the Civil Rights Movement during HS?
- Did you participate in the movement? How so?
- Shaffer Chapel Church has had large influences in Muncie. Did you go to any gatherings there? Rev Tony Oliver – People's Economic Progress Group 1960...
United Auto Worker's Union
- Many consider religion a major part of the black community. Did religion play a role in your life?
- What values influenced your upbringing? Did you pass those on to your daughter?
- Tell me about Talia? What is she doing?

BSU Undergrad

- You initially started at Ball State in 1971 to major in nursing. What drew you to that field?

- According to Tony Edmunds, author of *BSU: An Interpretive History*, Even by 1977, only about 5% of BSU students were AA (E: 214). What was it like being the vast minority in this higher education institution?
- Did you experience any more discrimination while at Ball State?
- Ball State students were not as active in protesting as other students in the nation. Were you politically active as a student here in the 70s?
- You worked in the office of Special Programs, which is now the Multicultural Center. What sort of things did you do while working there?
- Did you have a sense of community with other AA BSU students?
- Did you have any black professors? How do you think that affected your education?
- Tell me about how you became Miss Black Ball State in 1973?
- While you attended BS, Emens Auditorium hosted many performers and speakers over the years, including Johnny Cash in 1974 and Bill Cosby in 1975. Did you attend any memorable performances?
- You didn't get a degree in nursing, correct? Why not?
- What did you do after that time?

IUPUI and Career

- What drew you to the Public Health and Environmental Health fields? IUPUI?
- By the time you began at IUPUI in 1990, you already had your daughter. What was it like pursuing an undergraduate degree with a child? Tell me about Talia?
- Where were you living during that time?
- How was the dynamic of IUPUI different from or similar to BSU?

- Throughout your career, you have been involved in a variety of urban development projects. Tell me about some of those experiences?
- Why do you feel that community involvement is important?
- Do you face any discrimination in the workforce?
- **What are the challenges to being an African American woman in positions of power within these organizations?**

BSU Masters of Urban and Regional Planning

- What made you come back to Ball State to earn your masters in urban and Regional Planning?
- In what ways was Ball State different during the 90s from what it was like in the 70s?
- How has your college education impacted your life?
- Has your formal education provided you with opportunities to better your social standing?
- Do you think that your undergraduate and graduate experiences have changed your cultural perspective in any way?
- What sort of lasting impact from the Civil Rights Movement have you noticed have influenced higher learning institutions?
- Since you graduated from Ball State, you have remained involved in many programs and aspects of the university with the BSU Alumni Council and the Black Alumni Constituency. What changes have you noticed in the culture of Ball State since you first attended in 1971?

Closing

- I want to commend you for all the awards and recognitions you have received for your work and involvement in various organizations. What accomplishment would you say you are the most proud of?
- **What sort of advice would you give black students pursuing higher education?**

Before we conclude, is there anything else you would like to share about your life, career, or Ball State experiences that we haven't had the chance to talk about?

On behalf of the Ball State University African American Alumni Oral History Project, I'd like to thank you for your participation.

Archives and Special Collections

University Libraries



Ball State University
Bracken Library, Room 210
Muncie, IN 47304

Phone: 765-285-5078
FAX: 765-285-8149
Email: libarchives@bsu.edu

Ball State University African-American Alumni Oral History Project

Archival Identification:

Interviewer: Kristal All

Interviewee: Teresa Jeter

Videographer: Janae Troyer

Supervisor: Dr. Michael Doyle

Date of interview: March 21, 2015

All: Hello, my name is Kristal All. Today's date is March 21, 2015, and I am interviewing Teresa Jeter on the Ball State campus as part of the Ball State University African-American Alumni Oral History Project. Thanks for coming out today, Teresa. How are you feeling?

Jeter: I'm great and I'm glad to be here.

All: Okay good. So when and where were you born?

Jeter: I was born in Richmond, Indiana. Um, so you asked me when, so I guess I'll tell you. [laughs] In 1953 I was born there. Lived there for about a couple years before moving to Muncie.

All: Okay. Do you have any siblings?

Jeter: I have one brother and one sister.

All: Describe your childhood. Like your home life as a child.

Jeter: Very interesting. My mom and dad, my sister, brother, and I. So five of us. And um, most of my childhood I remember growing up in Muncie. So I lived here most of my life. And we had a very happy childhood. A very musical family.

[1:00]

My mom taught us piano lessons, and so my sister, brother and I played piano. And we played by ear as well. I remember my dad locating a piano and rolling it three blocks down the street so we could get it. And so we were walking with him down the street and I think we were about 3, 4, or 5 years old, and so, he had to dismantle part of it to get it in the house. And the only place to put it in the house

was in their bedroom. And so we were playing piano and a lot of music in the house. So we had a great, great family atmosphere, and of course, we are a religious family. We sung all over the place. In church and at various venues as a family. So we were very fortunate to be able to do that.

All: And did you continue music through your schooling and adult life?

Jeter: I did. I played the flute and the piccolo.

[2:00]

Most of us started instruments in school in the fifth grade. Started playing flute, piccolo through middle school, high school, and once I got to high school, I played in the orchestra because I was part of the majorette core. So I didn't play as much, but I did continue to play. And I played at church. And for a time I lived in Los Angeles for about ten years. And so I was out there. I didn't play but I continued to sing. I did a lot of background singing, a lot of commercials while I was out there. In some form or fashion I was still involved in music.

All: When were you in Los Angeles?

Jeter: I was there from '75 to '84 during that time.

All: So that would be after your college experience.

Jeter: Yes. My initial experience here at Ball State. My sister and I went out there on Spring Break. I said, "I'm coming back out here!" And so that's exactly what I did.

[3:00]

And it was great. I enjoyed myself in Los Angeles. Yes.

All: That's fun. So to what extent did your family value education?

Jeter: Well, they've always valued education. Certainly did. My dad, he only went as far as eighth grade. Because in his day, it was very important for them to—he grew up on a farm, so it was important for the guys, the boys and the kids in the family to work on the farm. So that was the extent of his education. My sister went to college, and so did my brother. So they put emphasis on education. And my mom also had some business school. It was always a very thing that we would continue education throughout, uh, after high school.

All: So you always knew you would want to go to college?

Jeter: I did.

All: Okay. Um, where did you go to grade school?

Jeter: Here in Muncie. Um, let me see. West Longfellow School, which is still there.

[4:00]

East Longfellow, which is no longer there. The Buley Center is where the East Longfellow School used to be.

All: Okay.

Jeter: Then Keaner (??) High school, and then Muncie Central High School.

All: And what was that like, in all your...

Jeter: That was very exciting, because I tell you, there was a lot of things going on in the community. School is very important. I loved school, I excelled in school. Teachers were very, very motivated—or I should say I was motivated to learn. So I've always had a great experience with school. And I remember teachers coming to our house before the school year started and introduce themselves, and walk through the neighborhood. And of course unlike today that doesn't happen. Um, and so they had a personal connection with us. My mom and dad always got involved in school and PTA [Parent-Teacher Association], that kind of thing. And so school—I enjoyed school. It was a very good experience for me.

All: That's good.

[5:00]

By—so by the time you started school, public schools were integrated. How much diversity did you school have?

Jeter: Uh, there were I th—my neighborhood, called the Whitely neighborhood, was mostly African American. However, there were Caucasians as well as Hispanics in my classes. And so there was a mix there, but mostly African American.

All: And how did that affect your experience in school?

Jeter: Certainly now when I look back over, very enriching. But they were just neighbors and kids in school. Everybody did everything together. And so that's how we grew up.

All: Okay. And today it sort of feels like there's not as much emphasis on Black History. So when you were in school in your younger years, how did Black History come into the classroom?

Jeter: I don't recall Black History like they have a Black History Month or a special Black History program.

[6:00]

What I recall are teachers and principals who were African American. Which was great, because we saw them in action. My, oh let's see, elementary school, my principal was African American—Dr. Foster. Mrs. Red, she was an African American teacher in my middle school, and so was, let's see who else. There was Faulkner, Stewart, who was very, very involved in the community. She was the one that did the Muncie Annual Christmas Sing. She started that program. And she was my music teacher. And so I certainly had other African American teachers in middle school. So I had per—I could see that close up and personal in terms of actual those African American mentors that were principals and teachers. And matter of fact they lived in my neighborhood.

[7:00]

So it wasn't anything different with it. But there wasn't a special emphasis on Black History like it is today.

All: Okay. And then, going to a school that had mostly African Americans, did you experience any discrimination while you were there?

Jeter: Middle school, who's thinking about that? I [laughs] I don't think so. Middle school, I don't think so. I didn't have that experience, to be honest with you. I was involved in so many things: band. My sister and I were talking not too long ago about being a part the band where you had a mixture of guys and girls and blacks and whites. And no one ever got in trouble that were—that participated in band. Couldn't understand why that happened. Well music certainly was a joyful kind of thing. But in terms of discrimination, no. When we challenged each other in first seat or second seat or third seat we challenged each other.

[8:00]

We were sitting in the hall so the teacher wouldn't know who was playing what. And so there wouldn't be any—you know, it was a fair process. And so that's my knowledge and experience in remembering what about any discrimination. I didn't experience that at all.

All: Okay. And what high school did you say you went to?

Jeter: Muncie Central High.

All: Okay. And was it the same kind of thing there?

Jeter: Yes. I was the head majorette there. I was the chairperson for the Musical Moods, which was an annual musical that culminated at the end of the school year. And certainly were a variety of teachers involved. Different backgrounds. I can't say I honestly experienced that at all in Muncie.

[9:00]

Per—if, you know I don't—I can't speak for anyone else, but I certainly can speak for myself and say that I didn't have that experience.

All: Okay. You mentioned the Buley center being uh—in today. So are there any sort of latchkey programs or extracurricular activities that you did after the school day?

Jeter: I did. I was part of, let's see, bowling. I bowled what I think about middle school. And like I said I was part of the majorettes. We marched in parades. We marched at the games. We practiced after school. That kind of thing. I'm trying to think what else. We were in the plays. With different things like that. There was another community center in the community, so we would go there as part of a sorority of neighborhood girls. And so we did community projects even way back then in middle school. Which was—we carried that through high school as well. So there was always something going on.

[10:00]

And after that we would go into church, you know, practicing, singing, traveling somewhere. So I was busy, you know, doing a lot of things. And so, all the kids never got—didn't get into any trouble because we were too busy or too tired after school. And by the time that was over we were at home sleeping, you know, after we ate dinner. So no, I think that it was a lot of things going on. And parents were home when the kids got there as well. I think the latchkey thing maybe started a lot later. But even my parent—my mom or my dad you would each, you know, someone was at home by the time we got there. So, no, I don't recall any latchkey situation.

All: Okay. And then, what do you remember about the civil rights movement?

Jeter: I grew up during—oh wow. I remember, I believe I would've been in the fifth grade when Dr. Martin Luther King was murdered.

[11:00]

I remember when that happened. Fifth grade, I don't know. My teacher was Mrs. Gill (?). That's amazing I still remember who she was. And when that happened. Prior to that, I remember—let me see. Robert Kennedy passed away after that. I

remember going to Anderson with my dad. He took us all on the bus after church on a Wednesday night to go here. Robert Kennedy—no—yeah—Robert Kennedy speak in Anderson at that big high school over there. That was very interesting. The ministers back then in the African American community were very vocal advocates about civil rights. More than they are today. I could point to Reverend J.C. Williams in Muncie. Dr. Brovis (?). These were African American pastors who really got involved in local politics, civil rights, NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People], those kinds of things.

[12:00]

And so—and then they passed that on to their church members. What was going on in the community, encouraging people to get involved. So I—there—that was really been the height of the civil rights period when I was in middle school.

All: Yeah. And you mentioned how ministers had played such a role in the civil rights movement here in Muncie. Reverend Anthony Oliver: he funded—or he started the People's Economic Progress Group in 1960. Do you know anything about that?

Jeter: I remember him. They all were in the vicinity. Like, you know, I believe in the Whitely neighborhood. But three or four churches like within three- or four-block radius. They were, so they were all gro—they were all involved during that time. And they were in close proximity to each other in the Whitely community. So yes, I recall that.

All: Were you or anyone in your family involved in those...?

[13:00]

Jeter: Ah, let me see. I can't recall acti—I know we would go to some of the meetings. And we would go to a lot of what we heard was during church time. You know, the meetings and the discussions about that. A lot of the sermons were mixed with the civil rights, you know, talk. Any special meetings? No, I don't remember that at all.

All: So yes. You said religion plays a major role in your life. What sort of influence did that have on you?

Jeter: Well it certainly kept us out of trouble. [laughs] We were at church all the time. We were doing the prayer service, rehearsing for rehearsal, and then of course being at church on Sunday, Sunday School, singing during the church time, traveling to other churches dur—on Sunday to just fellowship with them.

[14:00]

It played a major role. That's—that upbringing certainly impacted my life to this day. So it was a major part of, not only my family, but the community. So the kids I went to school with, they were in the churches, you know. It kept us busy. The church did a lot of things, not just church on—during, you know, Wednesdays and Sundays. But you had people in the church that mentored the kids. Like my dad, he, you know, he was referees for baseball and basketball and football in the community. And he was very visible. So during the church, you would see a lot of the people that were very active that way. And it just didn't stop on Sunday and Wednesday, but, you know, just throughout the week just being involved.

[15:00]

All: And what church did you go to?

Jeter: At that time it was Union Missionary Baptist Church.

All: Did you have any specific mentors or sources of inspiration for you that you aspired to growing up?

Jeter: Ah, let's see. Oh my goodness. Well during various times I recall some of the key mentors were certainly my teachers. There was a teacher named Mr. Garinger (??), who was my sixth grade teacher. And he motivated the kids very, you know. He was very unique in how he challenged us to learn and to continue reading beyond the assignments, that kind of thing. So he was a mentor of mine. Doris Faulkner (??) was a mentor of mine because she's very pretty and one of the few African American females in the community that was part of the education system at that level.

[16:00]

So, ah yeah, she's good, she's pretty. And she played and she could sing. I thought, Oh that's nice. So I had a lot of mentors. Mentors in the church. Mrs. Lovell (??), who's a teacher as well. She was never my teacher. She's also a graduate of Ball State University. Always lived the next block up from us. So she was a great mentor. Plus she was our church choir director as well. So a lot of mentors in the community. My parents certainly were great mentors as well.

All: And what were your parents' names?

Jeter: My mom's name is Willa Stephens and my dad Q.L. Stephens.

All: And what about your siblings? Were they—What are their names?

Jeter: Paula and Wayne. My sister helps co-pastor a church. My brother is a very successful evangelist that travels all over the world.

[17:00]

He's a gifted musician. Matter of fact they were giving him lessons at Ball State in elementary school. That's how gifted he was. And could play by ear, was playing the—can't even—can't even name what this big old organ is with the pipes. And he was playing with the two feet and could just barely could get his feet on the pedals. But they saw then I don't know someone heard him when he was playing before. He just excelled in music that way. So he continues to do that. He travels with a couple well-known evangelists. But very successful.

All: Is he older or younger than you?

Jeter: He's one year older. My sister's thirteen months older than I am and my brother is about fifteen months younger.

All: So did you look up to them and...

Jeter: Did I look up them?

All: Yeah. Your brother being so gifted, like, did you aspire to be more like him?

Jeter: No. [laughter] Not really. Because we grew up with him doing that.

[18:00]

So, and he played for us, you know, once he got—because he was playing for my sister and I as well as—we call it the Ceevis trio. He was playing by the time he was six or seven years old. He was already playing really, really well. So it was just natural. Personally we didn't see him as somebody special. He was just doing what he always did. And my sister certainly is a great, great mentor as well, and because we were so close in age, we really hung out a lot. That kind of thing. So she's a very—she's an author too. She's written a co—book. But she's very down to earth, you know. First born, they're a little bit different. [laughs]

All: What sort of values did your parents instill upon you?

Jeter: That's a good question. Actually my parents lived the example. You know, tell us, "You need to do like this," "Don't do this."

[19:00]

They just showed us in their everyday life; gave us our values that way. They were great parents, always there. Stayed true to their word. If they said they were gonna do something, they did it. If they couldn't do it, they said why they couldn't. That kind of thing. So they lived an example. They weren't the type of parents that said, You need to do this, and I did that. But my dad was a no-

nonsense person. I remember once, my brother and I were cutting up in the back of the bus. And when I talk about the bus, he drove—my dad drove the church bus. So we had come from somewhere singing, the bus was full of us kids after singing. My brother and I were cutting up in the back of the bus, and my dad was driving the bus, and all of a sudden he stopped the bus in the middle of the street, right. And he gets up and he comes back, I said [sighs]. And I—What is he getting ready to do? Well he comes pops us up—pops us upside the head. I'm thinking, Oh this is embarrassing. And then went back and sat down. [laughs] and drove the bus back to the church.

[20:00]

He was a no-nonsense man. Very funny, though. Very, very funny, kind man. But he didn't—we weren't supposed to be clowning around. He reminded us that we weren't supposed to be clowning around. So. But, yeah, he's—he was a great mentor. My dad passed away in 2010. So we certainly remember all the things—he's a very loved man, beloved man. Everybody knew him in the community. He's the kind of person that would, say for example, it snowed the night. He'd be getting in his truck maybe three or four o'clock in the morning. Just plow out people's driveways. And right in front of their homes, and so he wouldn't say he did it. He just did it. So that's the kind of mentor he was.

All: That's good. What sort of family traditions did you have?

Jeter: Family traditions, wow. Well every Thanksgiving and Christmas, we went down—we went to Richmond, to my mom's house.

[21:00]

So we gathered—to my grandmother's house. And we'd gather there, and have a traditional meals. And everybody ended up around the piano singing. And that's what we did for the holidays, pretty much. We always went fishing with my dad. That was great. He would always catch the fish and we never did. So it was very boring for us at times. It was like, "Dad, come on now. Why are you catching all the fish and we aren't getting any?" [laughs] So that was fun. We grew up with a garden every year. We had a garden right next door to our house. It was about a half-block long. This is in the—in Whitely. We're not talking about on Farmland. And so every year we would have to—my sister and brother and I. We'd get out there. My dad would plow the, you know, the rows first. We would plant the seeds. And all of a sudden the foo—the green beans and the tomatoes would pop up. And the corn. So we had to get out there every day in the summer.

[22:00]

Pick the beans, and the corn, and the, you know, tomatoes. And then we'd bring them in the house, you know, clean them, wash them, store them. Then next they

were out there again. I'm thinking, Didn't we just pick beans off of this vine? How did—how did it grow that fast? [laughter] So we did that during the summertime. So that was a great tradition. We did that. Of course we sang together, travelled together. So we had a lot of great traditions that we did.

All: Any sort of holiday traditions?

Jeter: Hmm?

All: Any sort of holiday traditions?

Jeter: Now or then?

All: Either.

Jeter: Back then? Yeah that was what we did. And we would always get together over at my mom and dad's house. And when they got older and we would decorate the tree. As, you know, the kids, grandkids, that kind of thing. And we didn't need a reason to gather. We just liked hanging out with everybody coming to the house.

[23:00]

And I said—one time I said, "Dad, let's have a clambake. Now this was in the wintertime. He said, he looked at me and said, "Teresa? Okay, well let me see if I can figure that one out." And he did. So we had a clambake right in the middle of the dining room. [laughs] He took the tab—now this was my dad, very creative. Had the shrimp, and the salmon, and the fish, and the potatoes, and the corn, and you name it. Whatever. And he cooked that stuff outside. We came in and the dining room table in the middle of the room, he just threw all that stuff on the table. And we were standing up eating a clambake. And it was one of the coldest winters—days of the month. But he said, "I'm gonna try that. That sounds good." So that's what we did. And that's how we grew up. Just very spontaneous on some things. And that was a lot of fun. That was a lot of fun. Great food. My dad was a great cook. So it was great.

All: How did you interact with the other people in your neighborhood?

Jeter: Let's see.

[24:00]

One of the things is, is that we loved going to dances in the community. So whether it was at—we used to have a community center in Whitely, not the Buley Center, but there was another center called the Whitely Community Center, which was initially a church, actually. So we did a lot of after-school activities there. But they also gave dances. And then there were dances at the Y [YMCA] across town

in Industry neighborhood. And so a lot of kids in the neighborhood couldn't go unless we were going. You know, my sister and I, and so all of a sudden all of the kids, a lot of kids in the neighborhood could come. You know, they piled in our car, and I'm thinking, This is not fun. We gotta go with everybody else, we just can't go by ourselves [laughs] to the dance? Well, they knew that my mom always showed up at the dance when it was time to go. So we saw her head poked in the door when it was time to go. So all the other kids came with us. But that was fun. That was a fond memory, being able to do that.

[25:00]

What else did we do? We played in the street. And there wasn't—we had a great park down the street, but we played in the street. When the cars come down the street we just get out the street, then we'd get back in the street and start playing again. We did that. I don't know. 'Cause a lot of our time was filled with, like I said, church, singing, traveling, doing that kind of thing at school. So that took up a lot of our time.

All: And you mentioned a park down the street. What park was that?

Jeter: McCulloch Park. Still there. Beautiful park. Then, doesn't have everything that it had back in the day 'cause I remember a bear being in that park. They had a little hill, you know, right, they have a hill where the soapbox derby—I don't know if they still do that—tournament. But before they started having that, there was a bear cage there. And there was a black bear that they kept in that cage in that park. I'm thinking, Okay.

[26:00]

Well we grew up that way so I thought that was normal. But obviously it wasn't normal. So that was in our neighborhood. That was in our neighborhood. So that was very interesting. Only thing I can remember about that bear is that it was big and black and it was stinky, as a kid, you know. But it was there for years. So we were very fortunate to have that in our park.

All: All right. So all the family traditions that you mentioned, and like, the way that you experienced your childhood, did you try to instill those upon your daughter?

Jeter: Yes. She course a little bit different. I was a single parent when I was raising her. So she didn't have benefit of another sister or brother. But yes, because, you know, the church, the singing. She was more involved in interpretive dance at the church. Not necessarily singing. But yes. I tried to lead by example.

[27:00]

You know, that's the best way, I think, is to—'cause kids these days, you know, you can't say one thing else and then—and do something else and expect for them to do what you say. It's not gonna work. So I always felt in the way that I'd been raised is to just be the example. That's the best way to for youngsters to be able to follow, I think. So yeah. Think so. What else did we do? We did a lot of things together. She played instruments as well. Went on to play the bassoon. When she was in fifth grade and she said, "I want to learn how to play the saxophone." I said, "Great." Got her a saxophone. Played the saxophone, she played it so well that when she got to middle school they said, "Oh we want you to learn how to play the bassoon." She said, "Well let me ask my mom." So I said, "Okay. You can play the bassoon if you keep playing the saxophone. Y'all figure it out."

[28:00]

“Cause I didn't play a—buy a brand new saxophone for it to go by the wayside.” Okay. So they figured it out, so she was able to play both of them through pep band and orchestra, you know, that kind of thing. And she did very well. She placed first in local, state competition for both instruments. So, but she doesn't play any longer. And I recall when I played my flute—I still have my flute, actually. My flute is, wow, oh [laughs], you know, there are pads underneath the keys, and they're old, old, old. But everywhere I've gone, I've taken my flute with me, because I recall my dad—he worked for General Motors and he purchased that flute for me in the fifth grade. Well, flute probably didn't cost a lot of money, but 'cause, you know, and no one was rich back then.

[29:00]

And so I remember one time my dad couldn't make a payment on the flute. And this was in middle school, so they came and got my flute. That's why I didn't like that. The store came and picked up my flute 'cause my dad missed a five dollar payment. And so I'm sitting in middle school, in the band, just sitting there while everybody else was playing their instrument. That was embarrassing [laughs]. But he was able to get the flute the next week, make that five dollar payment, and so because of that sacrifice that he made, wherever I am I have my flute with me. So I still have it.

All: Nice. Do you still play it?

Jeter: From time to time I do. There was a young man who graduated from Muncie Central, whose mom goes to the church. And he couldn't graduate with his friends. And so I said, "Come on, y'all, let's get together a little quartet. And our—you know, so I played my flute, and my niece played her clarinet, and my other niece played her clarinet. So we had this little—and my daughter played her saxophone.

[30:00]

So he graduated and by himself. And we played the instrument, and of course mine was kind of squeaky [laughs] because I didn't—you know, I've had it for a long time. So yeah, that's the last time I played it. So that was about, about ten years ago.

All: Wow. But you still have it.

Jeter: I still have it.

All: So tell me more about your daughter. What's her name? Where was she born, or what—

Jeter: Her name is Talia Jeter. She's born in Indianapolis. She's twenty-six. And she entrepreneur when she went to school as a kid. She made these little beaded kind of jewelry. And she was selling to the kids. Well I didn't know that. You know, she was selling them for a dollar. In preschool. And so, you know, when it was time for parent-teacher conference, she said, "Oh. Talia's a very entrepreneurial spirit." I said, "What are you talking about." "Oh she's selling all these beads to [laughs] key—beaded key chains to her classmates."

[31:00]

I said, "Really?" She said, "Yeah." So she's a very interesting person. She's in retail. That's her passion. So that's what she loves to do. She lives in Indianapolis.

All: So let's move on to your college years. You started Ball State in '71 to major in nursing. What drew you to that field?

Jeter: You know, that's about all I knew. Growing up during that time, the images that I saw on TV, you're either a teacher or a nurse. And so I said, "Okay. I think I'll be a nurse." Not knowing other things that I could have gone into. And so I said, "Well let me try nursing." So I got into that. 'Cause I liked science. I liked—didn't like math—but I liked science. And so I was very intrigued by that. So "Okay, I can put that together and work that." So that's what my passion was during that time.

[32:00]

All: Okay. According to Tony Edmonds, author of *Ball State University: An Interpretive History*, even by 1977, only about 5% of Ball State students were African American. What was it like being in the vast minority at a higher education institution?

Jeter: What was it like? Being at Ball State—to me Ball State mirrored Muncie's population. I believe at that time, the African American population was 5%, 6%

anyhow. So that wasn't a stretch for me. That wasn't shocking to me. I felt that that was the same community at Ball State that reflected the community where I grew up in terms of Muncie as a whole. So, but I knew there were some differences because, for example, there was the Miss Ball State pageant, and then there was the Miss Black Ball State pageant.

[33:00]

So okay, that's different. I know there were—there's a Multicultural Center now, but back in the day, when I was here, it was called the Special Programs House. And African Americans hung out there. That's where they hung out. So I knew there were some differences that way in terms of where people hung out. Didn't stay in the dorm. I still stayed at my—with my parents. And I don't know what the climate was in the dormitories at that time. I knew that there were fraternities and sororities on campus that were African American. Some of the—they had the Caucasian fraternities and sororities had their sorority houses and their fraternity houses. But none of the African American fraternities and sororities had any location on campus at all.

[34:00]

No house or anything like that. So I saw some differences that way.

All: Did you join any of the African American fratern—or sororities?

Jeter: I did not pledge at. I didn't feel pressured to pledge. When I look back over it I don't know why I didn't pledge. I could have. But one of the things I think is because the nursing program was so demanding. I mean, the timing was very—was a lot of study, and a lot of time to prepare for working in the hospital. That kind of thing. So there wasn't really my priority to pledge.

All: So did you feel like there was a color line in Muncie during college or at Ball State?

Jeter: A color line? What do you?

All: Yeah. So you noticed how there were white sororities and black sororities. And then, like, was there a divide in terms of education, like, in classes or anything?

Jeter: Hmm. In classes.

[35:00]

I didn't experience that at all. I was—it's interesting that you asked that question because when I won Miss Black Ball State—I won Miss Black Ball State in 1973. And I still have the article that was in the Ball State newspaper. They did a whole-

page article. I was reading through some of my answers and looking at some of the questions that they posed. And that was a question that they asked in terms of "Did I feel that there was any discrimination at Ball State." My experience had not been that. My experience was a great experience. I had not experienced discrimination, I feel, while I was at Ball State. I know some other kids had some challenges with that. I don't know what their challenges were, but that they did. 'Cause I heard some of that discussion at the Special Programs House. 'Cause the kids, you know, gathered there, talked, you know, have fun, play cards.

[36:00]

So—but I did not experience any discrimination.

All: So you worked at the Special Programs House. What sort of things did you do there?

Jeter: I worked there about ten hours a week. My work-study program. I'm involved in that. So that's where I worked. Helped to organize the first library over there: the Malcolm X Library, that's what they call it. So set up that library there. I also was part of the Big Sister Program for freshmen that came in, just to mentor them. In terms of campus life. That kind of thing. A lot of students came—African American students came from outside of Muncie, actually. Were from other places: Indianapolis, Gary. So that was great to be able to do that. I also facilitated some learning programs there.

[37:00]

I set up some opportunities for some of the doctors to come to the campus to talk to the students about opportunities in the medical field. That kind of thing. So I did a variety of things. Got to meet some of the celebrities that came on campus that was sponsored by Ball State. I remember meeting Diana Ross—I mean, not Diana Ross—Dionne Warwick. Shirley Chisholm. I wasn't here when Stevie Wonder came through. That would have been nice. Who else? So that was great to be able to interact with some celebrities during that time. So working at Special Programs House had some perks. [laughs]

All: And did the Special Programs House cater to African Americans and minorities or to all students?

Jeter: Yes. That's who gathered there, but it wasn't just for us. But there was a place for us to gather. A lot of people also gathered at the Student Center—called it The Tally at that time.

[38:00]

I don't know if it's still called The Tally. But some of us hung out there as well. Which was right across the street. But mostly African American students.

All: Okay. And you mentioned the Big Sister Program. Tell me about that.

Jeter: Well that program was set up by the Special Programs House. It involved upper class women who mentored the freshmen, sophomores coming into the university and just kind of took them under their wings and showed them the ropes a little bit about campus life and being at Ball State in Muncie.

All: So did you have—did you ever have a Big Sister, or were you just a Big Sister?

Jeter: I had a—well you know what, I didn't have a Big Sister because I started working there my freshmen year. So I was on the automatically a Big Sister. Which was great. So I was learning as—and at the same time being a mentor. So that's how that worked out.

All: Did you feel like you had a sense of community with—within the African American students—student population?

[39:00]

Jeter: Oh yes. Yes. Because a lot of dances we went to on campus. We went to dances off campus as students. There were a couple places in the community where Muncie allowed students to party. So we did that as well. And because I worked at the Special Programs House, I felt community 'cause I knew a lot of the students on campus. And I think that if I hadn't worked there I wouldn't have known as many students as I knew. So that was a great experience for me. 'Cause I knew everybody, everybody knew me. So for that reason it was a greater sense of community.

All: Okay. Did you have any black professors?

Jeter: I had none.

All: Okay. How did that impact your experience here at Ball State?

Jeter: Well, certainly it didn't have any benefit of not having a black professor.

[40:00]

But I didn't think anything about that at all. Didn't think it was strange. Don't know why I didn't, but I didn't. So 'cause I, you know, like I said, I had those mentors growing up, which was great. I had a high school, middle school, elementary school. But when I got to the university I didn't have that. But Dr. Foster was over the Special Programs—Special Programs House. But he didn't

teach me. But it was interesting that it came full circle because—although he was kind of my boss on campus, he was also my principal. Middle school principal—or elementary school principal at the time. So that was very interesting. I didn't think anything about it. I just knew that the school mirrored the community in terms of Muncie as a whole and the number of African Americans in the city.

[41:00]

So, but no. Didn't have a black professor.

All: Okay. Tell me more about how you became Miss Ball State—or Miss Black Ball State?

Jeter: How did that happen? [laughs] Let's see. You know somebody challenged me on that. They said, "Oh why don't you run for, you know, Miss Black Ball State?" I said "Oh no, that's not me." That's what I said. That's not me. I was not a person that needed to be in front or doing anything like that. Because after all I grew up singing and I was always in front of people. So that wasn't anything special for me. But they challenged me, and I said, "Okay." Then I thought, Well, I'm not part of any sorority, so I don't know how, you know, how that will go. But I said, "So I'll do that." So that was very exciting. It was very challenging, you know. Competition, that kind of thing. And there's, you know, we did—what did we do?

[42:00]

We did bathing s—I think we did a swim suit. We did evening gown, that kind of thing. I remembered the song "All Kinds of People" is the song that I sang, which was great. So I did win. And that was a platform to be able to share some of my ideas and views. So I was very excited about that. That—it showed me that I didn't have to be a part of any special group in order to be a winner. You know, so that was exciting.

All: All right. You mentioned some of the perks of working at the Special Programs House. Also, at—Emens Auditorium has hosted several famous performers and singers and acts, and everything. What are some memorable performances?

Jeter: Wow. During that time, you know, that's been a long time ago.

[43:00]

[laughs] Okay. Who was here? Like I said. Dionne Warwick was here. And because I was Miss Black Ball State at the time, I was privileged to present her with some roses, which was nice. And it was very interesting because when I was a kid, you know, you hear that kind of music. You heard Dionne Warwick, and Johnny Mathis, and you know, The Four Tops, The Temptations, that kind of thing. And I always said I wanted to meet Dionne Warwick as a youngster, 'cause

that's the kind of music I listened to at times. And I was very fortunate to be Miss Black Ball State the time she came to campus. And so for me to meet her was very exciting. Oh wow. There were—you know, I really can't recall who else came to Ball State. I know we had some great people that came through during that time at Emens. But that's the one I recall.

[44:00]

All: I believe Johnny Cash came here in '74? Did you go to that?

Jeter: He did? No. [laughs] I believe you.

All: [laughs] So have you come to any performances, like, since then, as an alumni?

Jeter: Oh yes. The last one was Johnny Mathis. I was in the orchestra pit, third row back. So that was a great, great seat. And somebody asked me in the back of me, "How'd you get that seat?" [laughs] Well I paid for it, that's how I got that seat. It was available. Oh yes. Johnny Mathis. There was, oh my goodness, there's—I've been to several performances here on campus. I'm a part of the Ball State Alumni Council. So that's great, as well as the Ball State Black Alumni Council—Constituent Society. So I've always been involved in campus. So something's always going on. I've taken my daughter, my great niece.

[45:00]

Here on campus there was a musical that was here a couple of years ago. I can't recall. A young lady graduated from Ball State and has gone on to do great things. So it was one of those—*Beauty and the Beast*. That's what it was. Packed at Emens. Great, great, great, great performance. And so I had a opportunity to take my great niece to that. So I try to participate in campus activities as often as possible since it's right in my backyard, pretty much.

All: So okay, you attended here from—originally you had attended here from 1971-1975, but you didn't get a degree.

Jeter: Right. I did not get a degree. I didn't flunk out of school. It was a C. I remember C average. Once I got to enter those—those courses were tough. They were tough.

[46:00]

And after speaking with the nursing department, we all decided [laughs] that this probably was not my thing to do. And when I think about it, I felt the same way. But I don't know why I didn't pursue other—another major. Because I certainly had taken a lot of the undergraduate courses. Did okay with those. But it was—so I don't know why I decided not to ask of that questions, what can I do with the courses that I had to finish. I just felt very defeated at that point. Really. I did.

And so that's why I took off, went to Los Angeles. I did. For about ten years. But I always knew in the back of my head that I would finish school. I always said that I would do that for myself. So—but the—that program certainly came in handy. I still ended up working at a hospital facility in Los Angeles.

[47:00]

California Hospital Medical Center downtown, which is about three or four blocks from the Staples Center. As a lab technician. So I still was around the hospital, and working there. So I worked there the whole time, actually, when I was there. And so I used the benefit of that education to obtain that position. So—and that's why I didn't finish. I certainly probably would have sat down with a counselor and talked about that. I probably could've parleyed, like I said, those courses into a degree of some kind. So.

All: So then what got you interested in public health and the environmental health fields?

Jeter: Same thing. It—it's that background about health. Public health. I remember growing up in Muncie living right next to the White River. And the White River isn't as—wasn't as pristine as it is now.

[48:00]

Before you could smell the river, and if you drove around certain part of it, you could see brown water. Because there was a steel mill south, after the—after you wind around the river on the corner of the Ball Road, River Road, and Jackson Street. There was a steel mill, and a lot of that waste landed in the water. So the water was always smelly, and it was brown. Really thick with trees and that kind of thing. And as I was growing up, I think I—boy, I—no one went close to the water 'cause it was nasty. It was smelly. So I said, "Hmm. I think when I grow up, I'm gonna do something about that." So that was always in the back of my head. Why, you know, why does that water smell? Why is it—well why is it allowed to do that. So that kind of motivated me to get into the science field anyhow.

[49:00]

So once I decided to go back to school, that was my emphasis on public health. In the meantime, however, they had cleared up the waterways, better legislation in terms of dumping into rivers. And cleared away a lot of the trees—I think too many trees they cleared away. They could have left a few more. But you could see the water. The water didn't smell anymore. I thought that was very powerful. So I pursued that in terms of public health. That's why I finished that. In about two years I was able to complete that and get that degree in public health.

All: Awesome. So what made you want to stay in Muncie using that occupation?

Jeter: Well. When I came back from Los Angeles I got married and I moved to Indianapolis, where I finished school.

[50:00]

And I really never used that degree. [laughs] Because I went into something else. Because I went immediately to get my master's at that point. So—but I still—that was—I'm still involved in environmental stuff. So Because I went right in to get my master's after I finished the Public Health degree, I went right into Urban and Regional Planning, which to me, tied in with that really well. That degree.

All: What drew you to IUPUI [Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis]?

Jeter: It was—I was living there and I liked what they—they had the Public Health degree. And so that made sense.

All: Okay.

Jeter: To pursue it there.

All: And by the time you began there in 1990, you already had your daughter. What was it like pursuing an undergraduate degree with a child?

[51:00]

Jeter: Wow. I definitely had to be determined because my thing was, in order to have a better life for her, I need to finish school. And at that time, she was two years old. So—and in the meantime I had moved back to Muncie because my marriage had ended. So I'm thinking, Okay, I'm going to school in Indianapolis, and I'm living in Muncie with a two-year-old. [laughs] That was very interesting. But I'm very persistent. And so I had that focus in terms of finishing school. Had very supportive parents who watched my daughter. I never forget two years—the first year—the first quarter when I started going back to IUPUI—when I went to IUPUI, I went—drove back and forth to Muncie to Indianapolis six days a week for a whole semester. That was very challenging. But I was able to do that. And, like I said, my parents watched my daughter, so then by that time she went to daycare. But I had to be focused 'cause I was up early.

[52:00]

Back home about nine, nine-thirty doing it all over again. Also, I was working part-time at the same time. So—but I was very focused. And I was involved, not only in getting my degree, you know, taking classes, but I also was involved with their Student Body Association there at IUPUI, which was great as well. So I did a lot of things even as a single parent, if you—I felt that if I was determined, had

the support that I needed—which I did—I could make that happen. And I did. So I'm glad I pursued that.

All: Okay. You mentioned you were working part-time. Where were you working?

Jeter: I did a—I was involved in—with Max Factor, who was part of—they since switched over in terms of who bought them out—but at the time it was Max Factor.

[53:00]

Max Factor was the store retailer that did make-up for folks in Hollywood. That's how they—it got started, Max Factor. And so what I did was, I did set up products in the various stores in Indianapolis. So I could work around my hours, which was great. So part-time worked really well. So I wasn't relegated to one particular store. It was several stores in the area.

All: And was that located in Indianapolis or in Muncie?

Jeter: Max Factor, that was in Ohio, actually.

All: Oh.

Jeter: I didn't have to go there, though. But—[laughs]

All: Oh. Okay.

Jeter: I worked in Indiana. So that's where they had a positional booked for me. So that was really fortunate that I was able to do that.

All: So how did you handle all that stress of every—all the business of that?

Jeter: You know, my life, really, even up to that point was like that.

[54:00]

I mean, like I have been sharing, as a kid, I mean, we were always busy. We're doing this, doing that. Going there. So it wasn't—I wasn't just doing one thing at a time. It was—I was doing several things at the time. And so—and I think that's one of the reasons why I was able to pursue my degree, finish that up, be a single mom, parent, drive round trip that long, you know, six days a week for a period of time, and get involved with extracurricular activities at school. Only because my life had always been that way. So it was natural for me. Now I don't know how it would have ended up if my life wasn't that way, you know, earlier. But—and that's, you know—and my quiet time is—when I called it quiet time was driving to school and driving back. You know, I had a hour going and a hour coming back

home. So that gave me some opportunity just to have a little, you know, a few minutes to myself.

[55:00]

All: Did you have classes every day?

Jeter: Every day.

All: Wow.

Jeter: Every day.

All: So how was the dynamic of IUPUI different from or similar to Ball State?

Jeter: To me, at that time, IUPUI was more of a commuter school, I'd say. There was no dormitories or any of that. So people went to class there, and then when class was over, people left. It's not like Ball State where you still have, you know, students through all day, and then they retire at the end of the day on cam—you know, on campus except for those who lived off campus. But that was really the difference. And I was obviously a little bit older when I went back to school. So—but then there were older people there as well. Non-traditional students going there. And I did really well. I excelled very well at the school. I won a science research opportunity project, and did some presentations there.

[56:00]

So I won a scholarship—went to University of Michigan during the summer based upon this particular scholarship that I won. And I—so I very—I had some good experiences there as well.

All: That's great. Did you have black professors there by this point?

Jeter: I had none.

All: Okay. How did that impact the school climate?

Jeter: Didn't think about it. Just—it was the same thing, you know. [laughs] Used to that. So—and—but there were black professors there. But I did not have any teaching—teaching me.

All: Okay. So, throughout your career, you've had—you've been involved in a variety of urban development projects. Is there any one in particular that stands out as emotional significant or—

Jeter: Planning projects?

All: Yeah.

[57:00]

Jeter: Oh. Well, first of all, one of the major ones is that I helped to—I developed a affordable housing program in Anderson, where I designed a program for first-time home buyers. I was able to get probably \$1.2 million to help support—to build those houses. Negotiate that contract, also worked with the local banks there to qualify people for the programs. So that was really a great, great program. And at the same time, in the community, what was going on during that time was houses were being torn down, but none were being—they weren't being replaced in the—in the—in the intercity. So that was critical that our program take place. Was the first of its kind in the city. In addition to that, I provided—I developed a reviving home loan program where those who already live in the community can get their houses kind of fixed up a little bit as well.

[58:00]

So a companion program, which—which worked really well. I'm partnered with Delco Remy America, which was really, really great because—I called the—well I called them my “sugar daddy” [laughs] because the nonprofit I worked with, you know, most nonprofits situated in the—in the neighborhood. Something that are obviously wealthy or rich. So they're typically struggling. So fortunately, Delco Remy America did it in community and invested in the community. So they certainly were very instrumental in helping with that program. One of their communications vice presidents sat on my board, which was great. And so any time I needed something, I said, “Listen. We need this. We need that.” So they were—they provided that.

[59:00]

I remember we had our first groundbreaking on our first houses. The marketing person, the PR [Public Relations] at Delco Remy said, “What do you need? What do you need?” I said, “Oh just some, you know, some chairs out there. Maybe a table and some refreshments.” “Oh, we can do better than that.” Well they come up with these gold-plated shovels and fireworks and a big old tent that goes up and down in the middle of the neighborhood. I said, “This is crazy.” He said, “You don't think too—” I, well, come to find out that, you know, they spent twenty-five thousand dollars on that. I'm thinking, Wow. That's amazing. So that was exciting. And very scary for me because my board really consisted of all pastors, except for the Delco Remy representative. And they didn't know anything about what I was trying to do. Well, the board chair, at that time, was eighty-something years old. But he knew my dad. He knew my dad from church. Right. He knew my dad, great reputation, man of integrity.

[1:00:00]

So every time I took a great big grant over there for him to sign, he would sign it. He didn't know what it—he would sign it. But he looked at me and asked me, "How's your dad?" [laughs] He was letting me know, "I know your dad; I know his reputation. I hope you're the same way" when he asked me that question. So—but it was a very successful program. We were nationally recognized as a Nell Street Program (?). And did a conference in San Diego where we talked about this program. I gathered all the partners that were a part of this, and it was a very successful program. Very proud of that program. So that's one of the highlights, and certainly another highlight is teaching in the College of Architecture and Planning. Not too long after I graduated, they asked me to come back and teach. So I taught comprehensive planning and urban undergraduate program as well as being a guest lecturer often over there in the department. So I'm happy to come back and do that.

[1:01:00]

Other projects? Wow. That was the main one, I think. Also, the Assistant Director for the City of Muncie Community Development, where we received federal dollars for housing and community betterment, that kind of thing. And so we did that—I did—I was with the city of Muncie for about a year helping with that. And one of the highlights of that was, I wrote a grant for four—about four different organizations in the city that was involved in homeless, you know, for housing. And programs that I—that's what we—I worked with them, we got one of the largest grants. We got two million dollars into the city of Muncie for homeless programs. And so it was so big, we beat out Indianapolis. They couldn't believe it.

[1:01:00]

So that was extremely exciting, 'cause they didn't—most groups are very territorial, and they don't like to tell each other what they're doing and what they're not doing. But I had to encourage them, "We need to talk so we can see, you know, come together so we get some money to help you guys." And so because of that large award, the representatives from the federal government came down to make that presentation. But by that time I was on my way to Anderson. So—but I heard about it. It was very exciting. That kind of thing. So it exciting to be able to give back to your community that way.

All: And why do you feel that community involvement is so important?

Jeter: Well it—people have—oh okay. My perception. I think that if you can do something in the community, whatever your expertise is, or just getting involved wherever you can, it helps everybody. Not just yourself, but it helps everybody in

the community, the neighborhood—starts with individuals, then the—your block, then your neighborhood, then the city.

[1:03:00]

I've done a number of, not just workshops, but neighborhood meetings throughout the city of Muncie, on many occasions. And some were very, very—some people were very skeptical about, you know, the reason for these meetings and I said, "Well, you know, we have to start somewhere." And so I think when people see that you have a vested interest, that they say, "Okay, this person is sincere. They're not going anywhere. Let's see how we can work together—make things happen." So I did that when I was part of the Muncie Community Development Department. And the same thing in Anderson. I had meetings in my office during lunchtime. I wanted to see how many people were gonna come. My office was packed. Standing room only. People standing outside. I think I had forty men—people come into my office one day. I'm there—[gasp] Wow. I didn't think it was gonna be like this.

[1:04:00]

But that just showed me that people were very interested and that they want to get involved. And the leadership needs to be there sometime, so get that going. So community is very important.

All: All right. What are the challenges of being an African American woman in positions of power within these organizations and programs?

Jeter: That's interesting. Well let me start when I was in high school. Let me start with that. I was the president—when I was a senior, I was the president of the—we had a group that consisted of Muncie Central and Muncie Southside School African American Seniors. I was the president of that group. And I understand—I understood that a couple of guys wanted that position. Well I didn't vote myself into that positions. The students voted me into that position. And at that age, I understood about being a female in a position of power like that.

[1:05:00]

Wasn't, you know, a big old political kind of group, but it was just a group that came together to determine how we were going to spend our due on our graduation weekend, pretty much. And had some activities to, you know, do some fundraising. And so, well I understood that there were some guys that wanted that position. Didn't like it, so I confronted them about it. "Okay, listen. Let's all get together. Let's talk about this." And so we worked together as a team. And I think that sometimes, not having a chip on your shoulder is very helpful. People for a number of reasons want to excel, and sometimes when they don't excel like they

want to, whether it's being in a position within organization. Sometimes that's— is disheartening. And so, sometimes people just want to be recognized.

[1:06:00]

And so, that's the place where I come from, in terms of recognizing—not necessarily because I'm female, not necessarily because I'm black, and not necessarily because the other people are males, but how can we make this work. 'Cause we're all here for a common purpose—common call. And so I learned that—at a young age, about, what does that mean. You know. I've been very fortunate because I also was awarded a position with the Community Builders of a federal program. Which I understand the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development under Clinton presented Clinton's ten-year, under secretary Cuomo's (??), they developed this new program, how to, kind of, rejuvenate the federal government. Get younger people in there with fresh ideas. So I applied for that—there—I understand there were four hundred of us across the country out of forty thousand applications that applied.

[1:07:00]

So I was one of two out of the state of Indiana that got that position. Very critical. I've been very fortunate to be able to participate in some kind of leading edge opportunities. So—so I know what it is to compete and to be in positions that impact decisions. And this instilled us with community, actually. In the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development it's-it's about urban issues—housing, homelessness, making homes possible. The goal is to not have anybody homeless in the community. And that's important because there are a lot of homeless people. But—so your question about my being able to, right now as an African American in those positions of importance, I pretty much competed all my life.

[1:08:00]

And so, when I find myself at this age, it's not different, you know. Whatever the issues were back then, I'm sure there's—they're still the same. Maybe, a little bit more of it. Since I'm older, I recognize it a little bit more, in terms of challenges. But, you know, I face all my challenges square—right square in the face. And so go forth with that. Because I find it very important that I get involved. And so I've always done that. So that's been my motivation for doing what I do.

All: All right. So you said that you noticed the challenges more recently. And have you noticed any changes in those challenges?

Jeter: I think that, you know, people want to be promoted. Want to be recognized for their contributions. That's—back in the day, same thing as it is now.

[1:09:00]

And I always encourage people to prepare yourself the best way that you can. In order to step into those opportunities when they surface and when they—when they're available. And so I've always tried to do that. So I think challenges are still the same. But being prepared to at least compete, and—is—is important. Prepare yourself.

All: All right. So then, you—after you had gotten your degree from IUPUI, you went straight in to get your master's degree from Ball State. Why did you choose Ball State to get your master's from?

Jeter: I liked the program Urban and Regional Planning, and it was the only one that I saw. I wanted to be back here in Muncie. I said, "Let me check with Ball State. See what they're offering." 'Cause I never—actually I didn't think about getting my master's. Really.

[1:10:00]

I thought about it one day—a professor at IUPUI, before he started teaching his course, he challenged us. I think we were all seniors in there. He said, "Listen, how many of you guys have thought about going to graduate school?" Nobody raised their hand. He said, "Are you kidding me?" [laughs] You know, like most students, once they get out a—graduate with their undergraduate degrees, then, you know, they're not thinking about going to school any—you know, most aren't. I wouldn't say all. So it was like, that's the last thing in the back of our heads, and so, he said, "Well y'all think about that." I said, "Hmm. That's interesting." So that put a seed in my mind about that. 'Cause I hadn't thought about anything past an undergraduate degree. And then another course that same year, that same quarter, I had to write a paper. And I wrote the paper. It was really good, according to my professor. He said, "You know, you gotta think about graduate school."

[1:11:00]

I'm thinking, Oh, that's interesting. I said, "Okay." So I thought about it. So I looked at Ball State, their book, and see what programs. Said, "Urban and Regional Planning. That's interesting. Let me apply for that." So I did. Talked to Dr. Francis, who—I think he's retired now. And he—he was the department chair. So I called, and I said, "Did you get my application?" He said, "Oh let me check." So I heard papers rattling and all that. I'm thinking, Oh I don't know if this is a good sign. He said, "I'm sorry, the secretary is out. She's on vacation." I said, "I'll call back." But—and I was glad that I did choose to go to graduate school. It's been extremely rewarding. And really, that degree has really been—provided opportunities that I don't think I would have had otherwise. So I'm glad I did it.

All: What sort of opportunities has it opened up?

Jeter: Well, the Urban and Regional Planning degree certainly deals with urban issues.

[1:12:00]

You know, housing, the environment as well. That kind of thing. And it was a whole different departure from what I've had while I've studied in the past. So I was excited about learning something new and different. But I'd been able to teach with that—with the master's degree. I've been able to build housing with that degree. I was able to work with a local city department, you know, agency to continue addressing urban issues. That kind of thing. So it was really—I was very glad to be able to use what I've learned to be able to do—and to teach?

All: What do you enjoy about teaching?

Jeter: What have I enjoyed about teaching? Well, you know, when you're teaching at—probably at college, you're probably teaching students that feel like they know everything already. [laughs]

[1:13:00]

And I know I'm talking to you guys, but—[laughter] sometimes they do. You know, or sometimes it's difficult to get their attention because they're preoccupied with something else, maybe. So I figured that in Urban Planning, you know, those courses were—they're not forty-five minutes. The courses that I taught were close to four hours, three times a week. So I had to be very creative in what I taught, what I did with students. But I took them outside and to different neighborhoods, and most of the students—all the students were Caucasian. Come from different places. None were from Muncie that I had taught. And so put them into the urban cities and see what they felt about that, you know. So it was very exciting, teaching new things, opening up, you know, eyes to new possibilities—that kind of thing. And so that's one of the—I was very happy to have that opportunity to teach and to share.

[1:14:00]

That was not my goal. My degree certainly isn't a teaching degree. It's not in education. And that's why I say that it certainly has provided me with various opportunities. So—but I really enjoyed teaching.

All: That's good. So in what ways has—did—was Ball State different during the 90s from what it was like in the 70s?

Jeter: That's a good question. I like that. 90s—well in the 90s I certainly was older, so my perspective was different. My time—I had to really prioritize my time. I think

the master's degree was a little bit more demanding in terms of my time and what I needed to do. So I really needed to be organized there. I really didn't hang out like I did in the 70s. Different learning experience. It wasn't my first time on campus, obviously.

[1:15:00]

So it was a—just a different environment in terms of learning what my priorities were. Same buildings. So, just a different perspective from the two different time periods. So...

All: Were there differences in the student population or the faculty population?

Jeter: Well, I don't know. I don't know because most of my time was spent in the architecture building. As an undergraduate, you know, you go to a variety of buildings: English, math, science. So variety of buildings, see a lot dif—you know, different people. But I was really tied to the architecture building and the library. So I don't know. I really couldn't say. There was one black professor there in the architecture building.

[1:16:00]

Dr. Linda Keys, who was there during that time. I was there as a student. And so—but she was not my teacher. And I was interested in doing it—before I was doing the re—she was part of the neighborhood planning piece. I wanted the environmental planning piece. She said, "What you doing in environmental planning?" I said, "I like environment. I like science and stuff." "You need to come in neighborhood planning." I said, "No, that's not what I want." And I asked her, "Who are you?" And she looked at me like I was crazy when I said that. [laughs] 'Cause everybody knew who she was. I didn't know who she was. I didn't hang out on campus. And so we joked about that in subsequent years. I didn't know she was there. I didn't know who the faculty were at that time. But she came into my class to introduce herself to me. And so that was a joke that we had through the years.

[1:17:00]

But she was the—I don't know if she was the only female at that time in the school of Architecture and Planning. She could've been. But other than that, two different times, and certainly two different campus climates.

All: Cool. Has your formal education provided you with opportunities to better your social standing?

Jeter: I think so, as it relates to Ball State. Like I said, I'm part of the Black Alumni Council—not the Black Alumni Council, but the Ball State Alumni Council. And

certainly part of the Black Alumni Constituent Society, which I currently serve on both of those as well as I was the president. I also served on the board of the College of Architecture and Planning as well. And I was there when we developed our fortieth year anniversary. And I believe this year is the fiftieth year anniversary of CAP.

[1:18:00]

So—but also when you go over there, you'll see my picture on the wall. Unless they take that down, and you know, I think it's still up there, which is—which is exciting. So then I received an award for a distinguished alumni there at the—outstanding alumni in the College of Architecture and Planning as well, which is exciting. But certainly being involved in campus activities to this day. And being so close to campus and Muncie, I have an opportunity to take advantage of some of the activities that are on campus. So I try to come out—what happened recently, I met Dr. Ferguson—president. And he—we were all in the suite at one of the football games, which is nice. So, that was great.

[1:19:00]

But in terms of recent social?

All: Social standing.

Jeter: My social standing. [laughs] That's Ball State. I—yeah—I never really thought about social standing kind of things. Sometimes I've been in the right place at the right time and met some great people, even in Los Angeles. Like I said, I did some background singing. I sang with people like Billy Preston. You're probably too young to know who he was. His sister did some singing with—some commercial singing and some background singing. A lot of that kind of stuff. I had girlfriends that sing with Diana Ross background. I had an opportunity singing background for her. But I wasn't interested in singing because I had done that all my life. So that wasn't anything that I was trying to pursue at that time. I knew I wanted to go back to school. That was my focus. That kind of thing. So—but social standing, no. I'm just Teresa, you know.

[1:20:00]

Just a regular person, and been very fortunate to have some great opportunities. And that's how I see myself.

All: All right. And so you're still involved in a lot of stuff on campus. Are you going to be involved in any of the fiftieth anniversary for the College of Architecture and Planning?

Jeter: They—I will. I've written something, and I've passed that on to them. And so they will probably incorporate that some kind of a way. I know it's next month. I believe it's in April. And I've come back, and I've participated that way. I was a lecturer one time during their cele—you know, their reunion that they have. So I—I come back a lot. So yes.

All: What sort of lasting impact from the Civil Rights Movement have you noticed have influenced Ball State or other higher inst—higher learning in—

Jeter: Institutions?

[1:21:00]

All: Yeah.

Jeter: Well. You would always—you—I think that certainly, in today's climate, certainly with the Civil Rights, some things have really resurfaced in terms of racial tension, that kind of thing. And of course, you, you know, it's in the media more than ever, about things like that going on. I think it's more noticeable today because of the media that we have—technology. Everything is instant. Instant news, that kind of thing. I think anything that we heard that was instant back in my day came across the radio. So you know how fast that probably was. I think that it always impacts—will always impact, because everyone has their views, their experiences, and their perspectives.

[1:22:00]

Which, what they experience will always be a part of their perception. And they take that wherever they go. Anybody would just been on the positive end or the negative end of situations. So I think that we—I know that there are more African American professors on campus now. And very visible. And as I've said, that that wasn't the case when I was here at Ball State as a student. So I think, you know, we can all learn from these experiences and see how we can all know and just work together. But to be in their society as a result of some of these unrests, things are going on. It's unfortunate that some things have to occur that are occurring. But what can we learn from these and move past that.

[1:23:00]

I believe we live in a great nation, a great city, and we have a great campus here at Ball State. And I think that whatever we can do to create a positive environment for everyone is what we need to do. And sometimes civilian unrest starts out one way, but it can be a very positive thing in terms of how we embrace change and how we can move past the negative part. And how can we work together. That's always been a policy of thing. And I think that's why Dr. Martin Luther King was so positive and so impactful, even to today. It's because of his views and it's

better to get things done in peace than in violence, that kind of thing. So it has its place.

All: And so do you see any future changes? Like what sort of changes do you foresee in the future?

Jeter: For?

All: For the way civil rights has occurred?

[1:24:00]

Jeter: Well—and I know when I look back from the time I heard when Dr. Martin Luther King was murdered—and the same thing for Robert Kennedy, John Kennedy—there have been a lot of positive things that have occurred. People are more sensitive in the good sense about issues that people have. And I'm talking about in the African American community, and I'm only speaking from that perspective 'cause that's what I am. I see—I think that, like I said, when these issues occur, or if we can recall and remember what has gone on in the past, and not go backwards in terms of trying to provide a better society, then that's what we need to do. We can't hold on to the negative experiences, only to hold on to them and say, "We will always have these negative experiences."

[1:25:00]

But how can we learn and move past it and grow and be a better community for everybody is what I would like to take from and encourage people to take from these conflicts that occur. So.

All: Have you noticed any progression in the Muncie community?

Jeter: Yes, I think so. Let's see. When—I'm trying to think when we have—I believe that there is, yes, I believe that. I remember, I remember when they had, and I'll start here, one of the first recognition of Martin Luther King Day. And of course it wasn't a holiday at that time in terms of a national holiday. But of course it is now. But I remember meeting upstairs in Merchants Bank president's office.

[1:26:00]

That was our little Martin Luther King Day celebration. We met standing up around the board—in the boardroom around the table there. And that's how—where it started, with that nucleus group. I think it was less than twenty people in that room. So it has grown and grown and grown. I don't know if you've participated in any—on campus where they now hold it here at Ball State University. I've been part of that planning committee for several years. And it has grown tremendously. So—and that—I believe that's a reflection of how other

things are occurring, is that there's more diversity—in terms of celebrating it. But it's not just celebrating the day, it's celebrating what it all means. And I believe that's a true reflection of what's happening in the community and the nation. Is that it's—it's getting better.

[1:27:00]

More people are recognizing that it wasn't just a man that did this, but—who's saying, "I have a dream." But it's people working together, saying, "We all have a dream. We want all of our families to prosper, be better, get along with each other." And so for that reason, I think the expectation is better about what we expect from—from our community.

All: And when did you say that you noticed the Martin Luther King celebration start? Like when was that?

Jeter: That had to be—wow. In the early 90s, I believe.

All: Okay.

Jeter: Early 90s.

All: And then, congratulations on all the awards and recognitions that you have received throughout your career.

Jeter: Oh. [unintelligible]

All: What accomplishment would you say you are most proud of?

Jeter: That—oh, that's on that paper? [laughs]

All: Of just anything, really.

Jeter: Right, I'm just—[laughs] Wow.

[1:28:00]

Others, uh, I think there are a lot. I think I—well one accomplishment is I have a daughter who is very independent. And has always been that way. And she's had to be that way because, I was—when I was leaving the house, driving to work, she had to get herself up, go to school. Even in the dark, in middle school, she was doing that. So she—she has learned to be an independent person as a result of that. So that's my greatest accomplishment, I think, is that. Ah, you know, the other ones is—are important, but only important because they are a result of what I believe in terms of what my life is about and what I think are important things

that I do in the community. So I think—I'm trying to remember all of what's on there. I don't remember—I just printed that up and gave you—sent that in, right.

[1:29:00]

I, you know, don't look at the resume often 'cause I've not had to use it lately. But yeah, there are a lot of things on there. I tried to make up for lost time, I think, [laughs] is what I did. So I—I don't know. There's a lot of things on there, and I'm proud of them all. But, you know, I just thank God that I've been able to do some things.

All: And then what sort of advice would you give to black students pursuing higher education?

Jeter: I think that higher education is very important. I say—always say—back in the day, you know, I remember when I graduated from high school, there were friends that went from high school started working in the factories and didn't consider higher education. But back then, you could go into the factory and make an excellent living. Supporting your family, insurance, and great benefits. And so that's what they pursued, but I didn't see that for myself.

[1:30:00]

I think that once you get a great education, you can usually—you can certainly use that to guide your career. I think it's a little bit more challenging today after you graduate from college to find a job, so to speak. But hopefully the outlook is better, in terms of employment, for those who will be graduating. But it provides certain opportunities, and certainly there are stats that talk about how much more money people make when you graduate from college versus high school, and so forth and so on. But it's that. But I encourage higher education. It's very important. It's very important for us—everybody, to pursue at least an undergraduate degree.

All: All right. And then before we conclude, is there anything else that you would like to share about your experiences either in Muncie or in your career, at Ball State?

[1:31:00]

Jeter: I'm glad that I ended that—my graduate degree at Ball State. I'm glad I came back to pursue my master's here. I'm very thankful for that. I met some great people—still have those relationships, and continue to be involved in the Ball State community. Giving back that way, I believe in Ball State very much. It certainly has afforded me great opportunities, in terms of my career. And so I'm very thankful that I've been able to graduate, like I said, from here—come back and do that. I always say, you know, pursue your dreams. Go after your dreams. No one can stop you but you, you know. Hear those clichés, "The sky's the limit,"

all that. I don't want to say all that, but I just think that if you're passionate enough about what you believe in, you certainly can accomplish it.

[1:32:00]

And I'm a living witness to that. Even given—being a single mom, or back to school, travelling long distances to do that, has—if you're determined, you certainly can achieve. So that's what I would like to say.

All: All right. Then on behalf of the Ball State University African-American Alumni Oral History Project, I'd like to thank you so much for your participation.

Jeter: You're welcome. Glad to be here.

All: Thanks.

[1:32:32]

End of interview

Charles Payne Interview Portfolio

Ball State University African American Alumni Oral History Project

Kristal All

Kristal All

April 23, 2015

HONR 390 Oral History Workshop

Ball State University African-American Alumni Oral History Project

Dr. Michael Doyle

Preparation and Interview Checklist for Oral History Interview with

Dr. Charles Payne on 27 March 2015, Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana

- Biographical Information Form
 - o With less than a day to prepare for this interview, I relied on the Biographical Information Form to give me a broad overview. Many of my questions were formed around the major life events he listed in his form. Since I did not even know who I would be interviewing until I got the form, I had to quickly create a quality compilation of questions.
- *Ball State Daily* article by Safarali Saydshoev, "Ball State Diversity Advocate Retires, Looks Back on Career"
 - o <http://www.ballstatedaily.com/article/2013/06/ball-state-diversity-advocate-retires-looks-back-on-career>
 - o This article helped me get a brief overview on Dr. Payne's career at Ball State and the legacy he left on the University.
- Civil Rights Timeline by Borgna Brunner and Elissa Haney, courtesy of Pearson Education
 - o <http://www.ballstatedaily.com/article/2013/06/ball-state-diversity-advocate-retires-looks-back-on-career>

- Since Dr. Payne grew up and attended school in the Deep South, I needed to have a broad understanding of major events of the Civil Rights Movement. Using the timeline and the Biographical Information Form I was able to trace his experiences in regards to events of the time, aiming at a complete history of his experiences with racial discrimination.
- Questions for Oral History Interview with Dr. Charles Payne
 - This is a complete list of the questions I formulated in preparation for the interview. They are divided into categories for different stages of his life, often addressing personal values and experiences with racial tension and discrimination. It includes variations of the questions I wrote for the Midterm Exam from the Edmonds and Lassiter books. I conducted individual research about the colleges Dr. Payne attended and used my comprehensive research to create logical questions to follow Dr. Payne's life, education, and career.
- Thank-you note to Dr. Payne
 - I wrote and sent this letter to Dr. Payne after the interview was complete and I had begun transcribing. I included references to the things that he shared, and reiterated the gratitude I have for his participation in the project.
- Transcript of the Oral History Interview with Dr. Charles Payne
 - This is a complete verbatim transcript of the interview I conducted with Dr. Charles Payne.

Ball State diversity advocate retires, looks back on career

The Daily News □ Safarali Saydshoev Published 06/13/13 2:18am



Charles Payne, assistant provost for diversity, is retiring after 41 years of working at Ball State. Payne came to live in Muncie in 1972 and can recall what life was like in the city and on campus back then. DN PHOTO JORDAN HUFFER

After 41 years Charles Payne, the assistant provost for diversity, director of office of institutional diversity and professor of secondary education, is soon to be retired, but the multicultural program he helped develop will continue at Ball State.

The multicultural program was designed to prepare teachers from multicultural secondary schools.

"I was particularly hired to develop this program, because back in 1970s BSU was one of the first institutions that offered a minor in multicultural education for secondary teachers in the U.S.," he said. "It's unique, and students who major in history, math or any

other subjects can get a minor in multicultural education.”

Payne recently celebrated his achievements at his retirement reception Thursday in the E.B. and Bertha C. Ball Center.

During his time at the university, Payne also served as the diversity coordinator for the Teachers College.

“When BSU had around 16,000 students, there were 800 or 900 African Americans, a few Hispanics and a few Asians,” he said. “The majority of professors and staff were white. In the department that I started, I was the only African American.”

Payne said he experienced some discrimination at first.

“Even though I was hired, there still was a misunderstanding between people on campus,” he said. “Some people were questioning of my teaching, of my job and my knowledge. Some of them would stay outside of the door and listen to what I would say and asked students how I was. Students told me all about this.”

Early in his career as an educator he taught chemistry in segregated schools, but he always wanted to help shift this thinking.

“I believe I can make my greatest contribution to society by becoming a change agent by creating a new America,” Payne said.

Maria Williams-Hawkins, an associate professor of telecommunications, has known Payne for 20 years.

“He pointed out the way things were when he came and some of the challenges that being an African American faculty member on Ball State’s campus could offer,” she said. “We go to the same church and

that’s where I got to know him. I think Dr. Payne accomplished his original goal. He wanted to be a medical doctor. Due to

'circumstances' things did not go as he desired. Instead he became a doctor of philosophy."

Jayne Beilke, educational studies chairperson, said she has known Dr. Payne for 20 years as well.

"Dr. Payne has a long history," she said. "What he has been through with racial and ethnic problems made him a strong person."

Diversity is still developing, but under Payne it has evolved from its beginning.

"The diversity program with Dr. Payne accomplished a lot, but we still need a long way to go," Beike said. "It's hard to make somebody intellectual, but Dr. Payne has done a great job."

Payne said he always wanted to write a book about how powerful education is using the story of his own family and being born in Mississippi in 1942, when it was still a legally segregated state.

Until then, Payne said it is satisfying to see the difference his career has made.

"People now do not see differences in race and are working together," Payne said. "I would like to make diversity a part of the curriculum and I'd like to see people include diversity within the discipline, because a good understanding of discipline is a good understanding of diversity."

"Name calling, physical discrimination, we cannot see it on our campus and that is a part of what makes me proud of what I do and what I have accomplished."

Kristal All

April 23, 2015

HONR 390 Oral History Workshop

Ball State University African-American Alumni Oral History Project

Dr. Michael Doyle

Questions for Oral History Interview with Dr. Charles Payne on 27 March 2015,

Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana

Hello, my name is Kristal All. Today's date is March 27, 2015, and I am interviewing Dr. Charles Payne on the Ball State campus as part of the Ball State University African-American Alumni Oral History Project.

Early Life and Elementary School

- Thanks for coming. How are you?
- So when and where were you born?
- What was Collinsville like?
- How long did you live there?
- Did you move to Piney Woods after that?
- Describe your family.
- Do you have any siblings? Are they older or younger?
- What were their names?
- What was your family dynamic?
- Did you have any family traditions?

- Many consider religion a major part of the black community. Did religion play a role in your childhood?
- Has it changed since then?
- What sort of values did your parents emphasize?
- To what extent did your family value education?
- Where did you go to elementary school?
- What was that like?
- Brown V Board of Education did not occur until 1954, so I assume you went to an all black school. What was that like?
- Did you have black teachers?
- Do you think that influenced you growing up?
- Did you experience any discrimination in elementary school?
- How would you describe your school experience?
- **You were around the same age as Emmett Till when he was murdered in 1955. How did his brutal murder affect you? How did your parents react?**
- Growing up, did you recognize/understand the segregation that occurred all around you?

High School (1958)

- You attended Piney Woods High School in Piney Woods, Mississippi. Was your high school integrated?
- **How did you react to the events surrounding the Little Rock Nine? (1957)**
- Did you have black teachers at your high school?
- Did you feel a sense of community among other AA students?
- What did you do outside of school?

- Did you face any discrimination in high school?
- What do you remember of the early Civil Rights Movement around that time?
- Did you participate in any protesting?
- Did your family and friends?
- How do you feel about your high school experience?

Undergrad at Rust College, Mississippi (1962)

- Did you go straight to Rust College after high school?
- Why did you choose Rust College?
- Why chemistry?
- Rust College is a historically black liberal arts college. What was it like attending there?
- The first president of Rust College, the Reverend A.C. McDonald, stated the purpose of Rust College was "to lay well a foundation for a broad, thorough, and practical education, such as shall fit our pupils for long lives of usefulness to themselves, their race, and the church." Would you say their goal has been successful?
- Did you enjoy your classes?
- What were you involved in on campus?
- **Were you involved in the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) at all? (Formed 1960)**
- How did you handle the transition to college life?
- Students at Ball State were not very active in Civil Rights or Anti-war protests. How did the students at Rust College take part in these movements?
- Were you active in protests during your undergraduate education?
- Did college change the way you viewed the Civil Rights Movement?

- **James Meredith was the first black student** to enroll at the University of Mississippi in 1962, sparking violence and riots. What do you remember about this?
- That was the same year you graduated with a bachelor's degree in Chemistry, correct?
- Did you go directly to graduate school then?

Masters at Tuskegee (1966)

- **Tuskegee has an honorable history** associated with the Tuskegee Airmen, and the Tuskegee Institute itself was established by Booker T. Washington. Did that proud historical legacy influence your decision to attend the Tuskegee Institute? Why?
- Were you involved in any organizations when you were there?
- Did you continue to be involved in Civil Rights events?
- **Did you notice any immediate impact of President Johnson's Civil Rights Act of 1964?**
- **What was it like living in Alabama during the Selma marches? (1965)**
- What was the student body like when you attended there? Did you feel a strong sense of community?
- Why did you go into science education?
- Were you employed anywhere during this time?
- When did you meet your wife, June?
- Tell me about her.

Doctorate at University of Virginia (1972)

- When did you start at University of Virginia?
- What made you want to go there?

- In recent years, only about 6% of the student population at the University of Virginia has been AA. What were the demographics like when you attended there?
- What was it like to suddenly be such a minority at school?
- **What do you remember about the day MLK was assassinated?**
- **How did you feel when you heard the news?**
- How else was the University of Virginia different from the previous schools you attended?
- **Were there any unspoken “rules” of what you were and were not allowed to participate in?**
- You got married in the same year that you graduated. What was that like?
- You earned your doctorate in Science Education. How has your college education impacted your life?
- Did you immediately begin working at Ball State after you graduated?

Ball State (1972-2013)

- What about Ball State caught your attention?
- How would you describe the culture at Ball State when you started working here?
- Has that changed in the 41 years you worked here?
- What was your position when you started?
- Did you expect to work at Ball State for such a long time?
- Do you feel a sense of community among the faculty at BSU?
- Have you faced any discrimination here?
- Were there many other AA faculty members here?
- **What were some of the challenges of being an AA in leadership roles at Ball State?**

- Tell me about your experience with the **Office of Institutional Diversity**.
- What accomplishment are you most proud of? Career and/or personal life
- What do your kids think about **the legacy of diversity** that you have created?
- Tell me about your kids. Names? What do they do?
- You majored in chemistry and science education. How did you get into multicultural education and become a major leader in diversity at Ball State?
- What do you enjoy about teaching?
- How has Ball State changed in all the years you have worked here?
- Are those good or bad changes?
- Are you still involved with campus events and activities?
- Did you notice any lasting impact from the Civil Rights Movement that affected BSU?
- Is there anything you would change about Ball State? What changes are in store?
- **What sort of advice would you give black students pursuing higher education?**

Before we conclude, is there anything else you would like to share about your life, career, or experiences that we haven't had the chance to talk about?

On behalf of the Ball State University African-American Alumni Oral History Project,
I'd like to thank you so much for your participation.

Archives and Special Collections

University Libraries



Ball State University
Bracken Library, Room 210
Muncie, IN 47304

Phone: 765-285-5078
FAX: 765-285-8149
Email: libarchives@bsu.edu

Ball State University African-American Alumni Oral History Project

Archival Identification:

Interviewer: Kristal All

Interviewee: Dr. Charles Payne

Videographer: Charelle Brown

Supervisor: Dr. Michael Doyle

Date of interview: March 27, 2015

All: Hello, my name is Kristal All. Today's date is March 27, 2015, and I am interviewing Dr. Charles Payne on the Ball State campus as part of the Ball State University African-American Alumni Oral History Project. Thanks for coming out today. How are you doing?

Payne: Well I'm doing fine. Thank you.

All: All right. So when and where were you born?

Payne: I was born in, actually, Collinsville, Mississippi. But I was actually raised in Philadelphia, Mississippi in 1942.

All: And what was Philadelphia like?

Payne: Well it was during legal segregation. Uh, extreme racism—I lived in a black community. I went to a black church. Everything I did was in the black community, you know.

[1:00]

So it—I guess you could say it was a pretty hostile community, although at the time growing up there, I didn't necessarily see it as—I knew there were dangers, but I didn't see it as hostile or as violent, as looking back at it now and growing up there.

All: All right. What was your family like?

Payne: Well, it started the—my biological dad was killed in a car accident about five or six months before I was born. And my mother—my father—I was the youngest of

five kids at that time. And so my mother, I think, was like twenty-six or twenty-seven years old. And suddenly she was left with five, uh, five kids.

[2:00]

And I had a—my dad's brother offered to help out with the family. And he asked her if he could take two of the boys and raise them—and raise them himself. In the meantime, he had just gotten married himself. And he met a lady who already had a couple of kids. And he had an agreement with her that if she would allow him to take two of his brother's kids, then he would not ask her to have any more kids. And of course she agreed to that [laughs]. So he took a brother that's just older than I am and me, and raised the two of us. The fortunate part of that is that this uncle was educated. He had gone to college; his wife had gone to college, which was unusual for that time. So I grew up in a house of teachers.

[3:00]

Now my dad later on became a principal, and then became what's known as a county agent, meaning he—he was in agriculture. Worked for—worked for the government. So I grew up in a house of teachers. In Philadelphia, where I grew up, most of the black people there rented their homes from white people. And the section of town that they would live in was named after the white person who owned all the houses. For example, Cook's Quarters would be known as—was owned by Mr. Cooks. Yeah. And—but my family, we lived in what was called independent quarters. Now what independent quarters meant is that all the blacks who lived there owned their own property—their own homes. So my parents owned their own home. I did not grow up in poverty—my household was not in poverty.

[4:00]

We always had food, clothes, shelter. My dad always had a car—me just getting around. I grew up around a lot of poverty. My mother—my biological mother—spent her whole life in poverty. Never got out of it. A couple of my brothers never got—well, as they—adults, they got out. But as kids they grew up—grew up in it. So I grew up in a household of high expectations. Not overly religious, but we were religious. Up to twelve years old, we had to go to church. We had to go to Sunday School. But after that, my dad said, "It's up to you now whether you want to go or not." Because during those days, the church was where it was happening. [laughs] That's where everybody else was, so you went anyway, whether you really wanted to go—wanted to go or not. So that's typically—I just said I attended all-black schools, church, community, everything that we—that we did.

[5:00]

All: And so you said you were raised by your uncle.

Payne: Right.

All: What was his name?

Payne: His name was Lawrence Payne. Right. Okay.

All: And then—

Payne: Well, what—a little more interesting than that, and this, is that—my great granddad was white. And he had two families. He had a white family, and he had another family with an Indian woman. Together he and the Indian woman had thirteen kids. And my granddad was one of the thirteen, uh, thirteen kids. Because my granddad married my grandmother, who was extremely dark. And so within the family, my uncles and aunts were kind of like a rainbow. Some were extremely dark; some were light-skinned; some were somewhere in between that. This uncle happened to have been very light-skinned, and so—so was his wife.

[6:00]

So I grew up in what was called—during those days, people would call it a high yellow African American—would call it a high yellow family of this. And people of light skin had advantages and were treated a lot differently from dark skin. It, uh, dark-skinned people. And some of the jokes—well not jokes—but some of the funny thing would happen is that during segregation, as a black kid, there were businesses that we could not go in, you know. For instance, if there was a drive-up—now we didn't have McDonald's and Burger King and all of that—but there were some drive—drive-up hot dog stands and things. But the one place in Meridian Mississippi where we stop at now. The only time, as a black person, you could go to some of these places is if you were working for a white person. And sometimes my dad would pull up in the car, and I would get out and go up and order food, and they would serve me because they thought I was working for him.

[7:00]

They thought he was white. And you know, we's laughing about [laughs] about that. [laughter]

All: Nice. Um, what were your brothers' names?

Payne: My brother was named Perry. That's the one I grew up—

All: Right.

Payne: Grew up with. Yeah.

All: And then, so were you close with your other siblings? With—and your mom?

Payne: Uh, geographically, yes. We were about twenty, twenty-five miles from—from each other. But we really did not see them—see them a lot. We would go out—go visit my mother sometimes, but not—but not a lot. My two older brothers left home relatively young. Neither one of them graduated from—from high school. They were actually migrant workers for a good while.

[8:00]

And they ended up in Florida—in the Everglades. And they worked for a sugar plant—Got—I don't know if you've ever bought the Gaucho (??) Sugar—that brand of sugar. But they worked at the sugar—and they worked there for years. They retired from that—they still live—well one is deceased now—but they still live there. My three sisters—actually I have one whole sister, and I have two half-sisters [elevator bell rings], after—after they were born. They still live pretty much in the same place, within about fifteen miles of each other. And when I go back—my parents are dead now—I go back into—I go to visit—visit with them. I knew them fairly well. Now one of my sisters I was able to encourage to go to college. She went to college and graduated. The other two did—did not. So we're probably closer now than when we grew up with each other.

All: So you went to college, and your one sister went to college. Were those the only two—?

[9:00]

Payne: Yeah, and my older brother—the brother I was raised with also went to college.

All: Okay.

Payne: Yeah there were three of us that went—went to college.

All: Okay. So what sort of values were you raised kind of to follow?

Payne: Education was a key value in my household. My mother used to insist is that the only way you can guarantee survival is through education. And she used to say, now, “When I grew up, black/white issues were really real.” And so people discussed that frequently. She would say that even white people have to respect you if you're educated. They may not want to, but they have to. And so, education that—honesty was always—being honest, having integrity. Christian values, I said, not overly religious, but we believe in Christian values.

[10:00]

And personal responsibility, taking care of—taking care of yourself. Being responsible for a thing—making a commitment. We were really encouraged to be persistent. That if you told someone you were gonna do something, you did it. And you figure out work. And we learned a lot of those values from actually watching my dad and my mom do—to, you know, do things. My dad, as I said, was a county agent. And we had a little farm. And he had to work during—during the day. But I saw my dad regularly get up at two or three o'clock in the morning and go out and plow four or five hours before he'd go to work, you know. And we had hogs and cows and things. And we had to have all that done by seven a.m., you know. [laughter]

All: That is early.

Payne: So those were pretty much the values I grew up.

[11:00]

Taking care of animals, taking care of—of, uh, of things, and.

All: So then, did you—did you try to instill those values upon your own children?

Payne: Yeah. Yeah, I did. I did. Uh, education—a push to—I didn't really have to push it that hard. It was something that my wife, also is a professor here—not a professor—she's head of the Counseling Center. So they grew up in a household of—of educated people. The one brother that I knew, I said was educated. My wife's siblings were also educated, although her parents did not go to high school. But they believed in education. So all of the cousins, the people that they know were people who had gone to—through education. We went to church very regularly. The idea of honesty and having integrity, commitment—we try to transmit those same—same skills. Yeah.

[12:00]

All: Tell me about your kids.

Payne: My daughter—well I probably shouldn't tell her age. She wouldn't—she wouldn't like that. But she went to Burris here on campus.

All: Um-hm.

Payne: Graduated from, uh, from Burris. And she went to IU [Indiana University]. Graduated from there. And she came back home and lived with us for a year and a half. She got her master's here at—at Ball State in design—architecture—not architecture, but consumer science and design. And she works now as a foster care, uh, she's education manager for foster care here in this—in this region. And

she's married, but don't have any kids. Yeah, then she has two granddogs, I call them, you know.

[13:00]

And my son graduated from the Indiana Academy. Went to Yale University and graduated from there. He got his MD-PhD from IU Medical School. Completed his residency at University of Alabama Hospital and is now completing his cardiology training. In about two months, he'll be a board-approved cardiologist. And his wife also is—is a physician. And they live in Birmingham now. And they're expecting their first child in July. And that's probably the greatest thing that's [laughs] that's gonna happen.

All: Aww. And then what are your kids names?

Payne: Okay my daughter's name is Lauren. Lauren Abram. Lauren Payne Abram.

[14:00]

And my son is named Gregory Alan Payne.

All: All right. So let's take it back. What was your elementary school like? You mentioned that you went to an all-black school. What was that like?

Payne: Yeah I started elementary school out in the country. The country school. You know, we didn't have kindergarten. It was first—first grade. And all of my classmates were black. All my teachers were black. We used to start every morning—we, we had a devotion every morning. Every morning we start it. And devotion consists of a Bible verse, Pledge of Allegiance to the flag. And we would sing "Got Bless America." We were—we were very patriotic, whether we knew it or not. We were—we would salute the flag.

[15:00]

We had a flag [unintelligible]. We did reading, arithmetic, uh, telling stories and things. I enjoyed—enjoyed school. Having been a teacher myself and looking back, it—there were a couple of us in the class who were teachers' kids. And I can see now the advantage that we had over the other kids at—that [elevator bell rings] were there. My mother taught first grade. She didn't teach me, but she taught first grade. She was right there on campus. And the ladies who taught first grade were her friends. Things of this. And so, I went to elementary school now—before I started first grade, I would go to school with my mom.

[16:00]

She's my babysitter, and so I'd go—I'd go to school. So by the time I got to first grade, I could already read and could do some math and stuff. So I made what—during those days, they called it double—double—double promotion. So I got double promoted. So when I was eight years old, I was already in the fifth grade.

All: Wow.

Payne: Because of double promotions and, and things. And my classmates tended to swear a lot. And one afternoon, I went home, and I don't know what happened. But I was just swearing up and down, and my dad said, "That's it. Those kids he's in class with are just absolutely too old for him," and put me all the way back to third grade. [laughter] So I had to start over—

All: Oh.

Payne: —Again.

[17:00]

And when I got, us, sixth grade, I got promoted from—when I got back to the sixth grade, I got promoted from the sixth grade to the eighth grade. I skipped—skipped seventh grade into—into eighth grade. And at that time, eighth grade—junior high, as they recalled it—would march commencement with high school. And so we had eighth grade commencement. And then I went to—to school called Piney Woods Country Life School, which is a residential school in Jackson—outside of Jackson, Mississippi. And that's where I went to—went to high school. Which was again, was a residential school, but it was an all-black school. Not different from public school—at that time—this was during segregated school—Piney Woods was a closed school of its own. So it had a library, where Philadelphia there was no library for black people.

[18:00]

We had a gymnasium, auditorium, all those kinds of things that would not have happened in my home—in my home—hometown, this. And most of the kids at Piney Woods—Piney Woods was started, really for indigent kids. But education was highly valued, and so most of us were [elevator bell rings]—whereas now, you'd probably call it college prep, that's about all we did, was college prep. So most of us went on to college from there. And so I also give Piney Woods a lot of credit for my accomplishments for where I went.

All: All right. Did you experience any discrimination at your elementary or middle school or high school?

Payne: Well, in terms of the entire group being discriminated against, yes.

[19:00]

Because I had to go to all-black schools. And however black schools were discriminated, then I got discriminated against. So—we never had enough textbooks to—to, uh, to go around. But there's now, again, here's where being a son of teachers, I had some advantages over other, other kids. I think it was my sixth grade year. I would always have books to take home. And some of my classmates didn't have books because they'd run out of books. So they'd walk home hands free. I always had a book bag with books in it. And when I got to the sixth grade, I didn't want to take all those books on the thing, so I decided not to go—this was the first day of school. The first day of school is when you get your books. And so I decided to hang around out in the woods for a while. And hopefully all the books would be given up by the time, by the time I got in.

[20:00]

So I got in, oh, maybe four or five minutes after school had started and everything. And the teacher looked up and she said, "Oh, Charlie Ray, there you are," and reached under the desk, and put my books up on top. And there she gave them—gave them to me. [Kristal laughs] And everybody else is kind of like sitting there looking. You know, like teacher's pet, you know. And—and all that. So I got books whether I wanted them or not. I had—I had books. The discrimination in Philadelphia was rampant. I mean, you walked on the sidewalk—well first of all, you could never touch a white person, under any circumstances. And when you walked on the sidewalk, if you meet any white people, you had to stand to the side so they could [elevator bell rings] go by you and not—and not touch.

[21:00]

Or the easiest thing to do was get off the sidewalk. So quite often, I'd walk out in the street, behind the car, rather than being on the sidewalk. And particularly if you would meet a young white boy—now you've got an idea of what they'd do when they would meet—they knew you couldn't touch. Couldn't touch them. So they would get in front of you. They'd—you'd move over, they'd move over. You'd move over, they'd move over. Course the wall—there's a wall. There's only so far you could—you could move or you'd try and they'd step on your foot as you go by. So rather than go through that, it was just easier to, uh, to just get off the street. I [sighs]—there's just many little things like that. For instance, when you got your change, you wouldn't dare hold your hand out, particularly if it was a white woman. You didn't dare hold your hand out to get your change. They'd drop it on the counter for you to reach down and pick it up.

[22:00]

If you were stopped by the police, you know, I was taught you hold your hands up. You don't wiggle your hands or fingers, you just hold them straight up with this. And the officer come, and of course they ask for your driver's license. And quite likely your driver's license's in your pocket. And so you asked for permission to get your driver's license. And this is where you had to really be careful. You couldn't get in a big hurry, you know. Or sometime they would pretend that they saw a gun or that they saw a knife or something that you—that you had. So you had to be really careful how you pulled your wallet and just everything out as you did. And then they would ask you to get out of the car, and the officer would stand really close to the door. And so as you opened the door, you had to be careful not to hit him or touch him with that door because you would have been assaulting an officer as you touched him with the door.

[23:00]

So you had to squeeze through whatever space was—was there for you to do that. Then they'd talk to you. You'd talk, maybe, at a, at a normal voice, and they would call you the n-word, whatever you say, "Speak up, I can't hear you." So you'd speak a little louder and then you accused of yelling at them. "Who you—who're you yelling at?" There are always curfews. But you never knew which night the curfew was on or what the curfew. Well you didn't know if it was at nine, or at ten, or at eleven. But then—so, at night, you just always on guard. But then watch for the po—now we live in a black community, and all policemen at that time were white. Now—so they didn't live in the community, and they weren't there all the time, but whenever they did come in, you had to be real careful, you know, with this.

[24:00]

If they were to pick you up—and this is mostly males that I'm talking about. If they were to pick you up, one of two places that they would take you to when they—when they pick you up. One was the—they take you down by the old—by the railroad track. And if they took you down by the railroad track, they would call you names and punch you around. They'd maybe not too bad. And then you'd leave. They'd let you go home. But Philadelphia was a—was a sawmill town. There were three large sawmills that were there. And it was called Pulpwood. And this is where there was a Pulpwood yard where they would strip the bark off. Yeah. And if they took you out to the Pulpwood yard, you were in trouble. That was—would be a severe beating. And you'd be swollen and bruised when you'd come back with this. Again, being the son of teachers, who—we were treated a little bit different from the—from the regular boys.

[25:00]

Now, we—first of all, we never were caught if we could—if we could avoid it. But if we were caught, they would say, "Look, Payne, you better get home, boy."

You know—now if I'd challenged them, that would have been different with that. So a lot of my experiences that I'm talking about really is something happened to my friends a lot more so than actually—actually happened to me.

All: Uh-huh. And you were around the same age as Emmett Till whenever he was murdered in 1955. How did that affect you?

Payne: Well, Emmett Till and I were exactly the same age. And one of the ways that parents sometimes would control behavior is to frighten you with events that had—that had happened.

[26:00]

Now, I just said, Philadelphia was a sawmill town. And the mills owned shacks—houses for the workers to live in. And most of these were white workers that lived in—lived in these shacks. But—and there was a row of houses, that we would call them, were just started just across the street from my parents' house. Now as kids, and these were poor white—poor white—now as kids we played together at times. Most—more of the time they were on our side playing. And we would play ball with them. And I used to raise rabbits. And there were some little girls over—little white girls—over at—over at the house, at the yard. And my rabbits had just had some babies. And then this little girl was interested in how, How'd the rabbit have all those—have all those babies?

[27:00]

And my mother heard that. And that scared my mother. And she came out, and she told the girl to go home, you know, after this. And she says—she says, "Ooo." She says, "You don't explain that." She says, "That's what happened to Emmett Till." She says, "That's what'll happen to you with little white girls." And now we had not talked about sex or anything. But when she heard there were babies, that's what can—and she was asking about the rabbits. But my mother just heard that, and I couldn't explain to her because I was only about twelve—I didn't know what she was talking about either, you know. And so I—but Emmett Till was used as "This is what happens when you look at white girl—just look at white girls." If you—now Emmett Till was accused of making a woo-whistle at the white girl. And so, whenever you saw a white girl, you were afraid to look at them. You were afraid to even open your mouth or to do anything of this—so Emmett Till was used as a threat.

[28:00]

This is what—this is what can happen to you.

All: And then how did you react to the events surrounding the Little Rock Nine?

Payne: Uh, the Little Rock Nine, uh, was—I'm trying to put—where was I when that—I was in high school—when that happened. Now with cable news, you get news twenty-four hours so you can keep up with what's going on. But during the—during this case, this time, you only got national news about five minutes in the afternoon. The local radio stations—the local news—did not bring local news like that. They would not talk about it. So the only way you'd know what was going on is through the national news. And it was only about five or six—it wasn't much.

[29:00]

It was about five minutes that you would—that you would get. And so we thought that the Little Rock Nine—that once they got in the school—now we could see the crowds that they had to go through—but we had assumed that once they got in, that they were treated as if everything was okay. And it wasn't until I read a book, *Warriors Don't Cry*, that was written by one of the people who was—was in that, is that we were completely misled to believe that things went well for them inside the school once they—once they got there. Uh, many of us were—this was the first attempt at integrating the schools. And so the Little Rock Nine—they obviously were very bright kids because they were chosen to go.

[30:00]

Only the brightest ones would get chosen to—to go to—to go to that. And people would ask, you know, Would you do it if you were—if you were chosen? And the answer to it was Yes. But now I was at Piney Woods. And so we felt as though, Yeah, we'd do it, and it would be any problem with that.

All: Did you feel a sense of community among other African American students in high school?

Payne: Yeah, that was—when I grew up, because of the situations and social situation and everything, I think there's a very strong sense of—sense of community. I think back now, in some instances made me too strong because you tended support and protect things that maybe you shouldn't have, simply because we were accused of everything. Nothing went right. Anyway—so you tended to defend people that probably were wrong and probably had done things that they shouldn't—they shouldn't have.

[31:00]

And so there was a very strong sense of—sense of community.

All: And then what did you do outside of school?

Payne: Uh, worked. A lot of time work for me was—was doing what my dad and mom wanted me to do there. But I had a number of little jobs. One of the things I used to do was caddy. Go to the golf course, and that's how we made a lot of money. Now this was before the electric carts and your shoulder served as the cart. And so we would go to—go to the golf course in the afternoon after school. If you caddy for nineteen hole—I mean nine hole and you got seventy-five cents, and eighteen holes you'd get a dollar—dollar and a half. And then if you do—it's called shagging balls, that's—people practice. You'd go down range and then they'd hit balls and you would run and chase them. Chase and I think you'd get fifty cents, I think, a bag.

[32:00]

Bag would have about twenty-five ball—balls in it. But, uh, we would—people would practice, and the caddy—and most caddies were black. There was a stereotype that white people couldn't take the sun, so they didn't want the white caddies. They wanted the black caddies 'cause the sun wasn't going to hurt us, you know. [laughs] And so, they'd be up teeing, and they would line the ball up on you. You know, they're trying to drop the ball on your head while you—while you were there. And I would play baseball. When the ball would come, I'd reach out and catch them, like that. And they didn't want you to catch them. They wanted it to roll so they could see how far it would go. And they would yell, "Caddy leave the ball alone." You know, and I holler, "Yeah, okay." And soon they'd hit it again. No they crazy as hell they think I'm gonna run this ball down, you know. It's coming right by me, you know, with this.

[33:00]

The last two or three you'd let go 'cause you had to take them up, you know. They wouldn't remember that you'd been catching them when that [laughs] when that happened. So—so caddying was a more common way we made—I mowed yards. I had a lot of yards—not a lot, but several yards that I would—would mow. Now this was before gas—gas mowers. This was when you had the push—you had the push mower. And one of the things about that is that when we would go to the golf course—I lived about four or five miles on the—from the golf course. And the town was between my house and the golf course. So we had to walk through town to get to—to the golf course. Now I could go around a town, which was—be an extra couple of miles or so. Or I could go through a couple of white communities and get there pretty quick. Now as a black-head you couldn't go through white communities unless you were going to work—something.

[34:00]

So one of the things that we would do is—we had two or three old lawnmowers. Now you probably have never seen one of these lawn mowers. But you could turn them over, and you could push them and just make them roll. And so what we

used to do is have these lawnmowers. And we would hide them on different ends of the neighborhood, depending where you were. And we would get that lawnmower put in front of you and push it when you go through the neighborhood as if you were going to mow somebody's yard. And that would keep the police from stopping you when that—when that happened. So—so mowing lawns was one way. Then also, I sold popcorn at the theater. Now the theater was segregated. Blacks had to go to the back, and whites could go down—could go downstairs. And I could only sell popcorn to blacks. They had a popcorn machine over—well then I could only sell popcorn to white—but I had to clean up the—help clean up the basically clean up the theater with it.

[35:00]

And it was always interesting. Blacks would be in the back of here and the whites would be down. And I'd say white boys, mostly, I think, would do that. They would get down low and they would throw stuff back up from down back to the balcony. And we was just thinking, Now how dumb is this? Because whatever they threw up, we could see it coming, you know. So you could catch it or get out of the way of it. But on the other hand, we could dump stuff over on them, and they didn't see it coming when [laughs] when it was there. And so we would take stuff in, you know. Bags of sand and stuff. We'd just throw it over, you know. And of course, the louder they'd holler, the more you'd know you got one. [laughter] You know, it's [laughs] and we'd go a good three-hour—Why? Why would they go to all that, and throw stuff back up, like? It just don't make any sense. Well it was just too easy for us to dump stuff or just throw stuff right [laughs] right over.

[36:00]

All: So other than watching movies, like what kind of things did you do just for fun? Other than, like, working and stuff.

Payne: Well we played ball all day long. Football, basketball, baseball. Those three. Uh, well you didn't have—when you finished your work, most of the time, most of us had things that we had to do early in the morning and late in the afternoon. And in between that was—was another of these little jobs. Or—and we'd go over—the schoolhouse was kind of—where we went to school was kind of in the center of the community. And there was a—and there was no gym, so the basketball goals and everything was outside. The football field, baseball—everything was there. And so it was just—it was kind of like a park. It was just open. And what we did mostly was played ball all day—all day long. Run—we had our own track and field.

[37:00]

We'd run and jump. That's kind of how we entertained—entertained ourselves.

All: All right. And what else do you remember about the Civil Rights Movement during your high school years?

Payne: I remember a teacher's—now again I was at Piney Woods, and so it was a little different from a regular school. And we were constantly told that you're gonna have to compete against white kids. You're gonna have to do this. Do that. And so it was always a backdrop of being prepared to compete against—against whites. Always wanted to go to—to medical school. And—and people would say, Well you can—you can do it. But when I think back—back I think, Yeah I could have.

[38:00]

But at that time there were very few black doctors in Mississippi. And they were only in cities. I'd never saw a black doctor growing up. And to become a lawyer during that time, I think it was illegal for a black to practice law in the state of Mississippi. And so a lot of those kinds of things just didn't make—didn't make sense. But yet, we were encouraged—teaching was the primary job that black people looked forward to. Where I went to college, the joke would be: Which one of the *ers*, e-r-s—which one of the *ers* are you gonna be? Teacher or preacher? Those were [laughs] those were about the only two things that you can really look forward to—look forward to doing.

[39:00]

One of the things that a lot of people are unaware of is that if you graduated from one of the black colleges—and in Mississippi there was Jackson State, Alcorn, Tougaloo, Rust College, uh, am I leaving out—Mississippi Valley State. There were like six or seven black schools that you—and just in the state of Mississippi. And in most of the southern states, there were black co—most of the black colleges are in the south. Now—so in the south, there were higher ed—there was higher ed in the—in the—in the black colleges. But most of them were not professional schools. You didn't—graduate schools—there were no master's or doctorate degrees. However, there was what was called out of state aid, which meant that if you could go to IU [Indiana University] and get accepted as a black person, the state of Mississippi would pay your tuition for you.

[40:00]

They'd rather do that than have you go to Ole Miss, Mississippi State—one of those. I would—I was at the University of Virginia, and while I was at the University of Virginia, Mississippi—the state of Mississippi paid a good bit of my tuition. Now I say good bit because where I come from—I was at Virginia in the late 60s. And blacks are now going to Ole Miss and Mississippi State. And I kept thinking, Boy, how long are they gonna keep paying me [laughs] not to go to these schools? And so my last year at the UVA—I was working on my

doctorate—usually when they would send me my application and my papers, it would come in a, you know, big envelope. But this time it came in a—the letter came in a little envelope. And I said, “This can’t be good.” [laughs] And so as I opened it, they told me that the state of Mississippi would no longer pay your tuition.

[41:00]

That my transcript and everything—‘cause whenever I would apply, I have to—I’d have to send them my grades. So they had my grades and everything. And it said, “You have already been accepted to either one of the programs—Mississippi State or Ole Miss, and you can transfer back to—back to those.” So I, at that time, just—I’m this close to graduating UVA, so why? Why’s—and I said, “Doggone it. I got to pay with my own money now.” So there were quite a few African American—for instance, if you went to medical school, they paid tuition. Now you’d have to pay your own room and board, but they would pay tuition. So that’s how, really, quite a few blacks in the south got professional degrees from up north. Because Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana—those states would pay black people to go out—out of the state, as opposed to letting them attend the—attend the schools there.

[42:00]

All: Yeah. So James Meredith was the first black student to go to the University of Mississippi—

Payne: Ole Miss—yeah. Right.

All: And that sparked a lot of riots and stuff.

Payne: Right.

All: Do you remember any of those?

Payne: Oh yeah. Yeah. I remember the night that James Meredith went into Ole Miss. I had graduated a year before from Rust College, which is in Holly Springs, Mississippi, which was about thirty miles from Oxford, which is where Ole Miss is. James Meredith went in on a Sunday afternoon or Sunday evening, late. So in the evening. And I had been back to Rust to visit some friends of mine. I didn’t have a car. I was riding the bus, and I—and on the radio, you could hear that James Meredith was on campus. The FBI had to take him to registration, you know. And there were great protests.

[43:00]

And all those little towns were up in uproar. The Klan was marching, people were flying the rebel flag, and all this. And so as I got on the bus, in Holly Springs even then, you know, uh, I guess it was the Klan, but you could see people protesting with the flags and burning stuff. I was riding the bus and we went into New Albany, Mississippi, which was one of the towns over from—from Oxford. I noticed that there were two cars trailing the bus. Now I was the only person on the bus other than the—than the bus driver. And when we pulled into the—the bus station, these two cars came in behind. And the bus driver got up, and he looked back at me—didn't say anything. Yeah, I was in the back of the bus 'cause that's where I had to ride at that time. And as he got off the bus, I heard him lock the door.

[44:00]

And I's "Oh. He's either locking me in or them out. I'm not sure which—which one." Now buses are up high so people can't really see over—over. And plus they had tinted windows. And so—but I could lean down in my seat, and I could look out the window. And as he was going toward the—the bus—bus station—the building—two guards, they ran up to him. And I saw him shake his head like that, and I could only imagine that they were asking him if there were any blacks on the bus. And he said, "No," at that time. And so it took me another couple of hours to get home, and as I got off the bus, I just kind of looked at him, and he looked at me. We could not say anything to each other. I couldn't say "Thank you." I couldn't shake his hand or anything. But he had probably—I don't know what he said, but he probably had saved me from a severe beating if nothing—if nothing else.

[45:00]

And he took his own life in his hands, 'cause if they had found me on that bus with him telling them I wasn't, well now he would have been in a lot of trouble when he—when he did that. So yeah, I remember very well when James Meredith went in to Ole Miss.

All: All right. And so, the first president of Rust College, Reverend A.C. McDonald, stated the purpose of Rust College was to lay a—to lay well a foundation for a broad, thorough, and practical education, such as shall fit our pupils for long lives of usefulness to themselves, their race, and the church. Do you think this goal was successful?

Payne: Yeah I think so. I think so. Rust was a—was a private church school—Methodist—Methodist school with this. And at that time was probably looked at as one of the more academic school—of the black schools with that. Tougaloo, I don't know if you found any—but Tougaloo was another—was a sister school, which was in Jackson. Tougaloo probably had the best reputation of that.

[46:00]

And in that—and from Rust, if you wanted to go to med school, if you wanted to go to any of the law schools, Rust would be one of the schools that you would've—that you would have gone to. Now what happened to me in med school is that I took—I applied to Meharry Medical School. Now Meharry is a black school—black medical school in Nashville, Tennessee, and it was also one of the Me—there were thirteen Methodist schools. Meharry was the professional school in those—in those thirteen. So I only applied to Meharry because I knew I was gonna get in there because everybody else from Rust that I had known had gotten in. The year that I applied was the year the American Medical Association told Meharry, “You have to stop taking students from unaccredited schools. You have to start taking schools from—” And Rust was unaccredited.

[47:00]

And the only way that they could take me was that everybody—that all of the people that they had accepted had turned down, and I was on a waiting list and they—and then I could be accepted. Now in the meantime, I had scored high enough on the, uh, what do you—the MCAT [Medical College Admission Test]—I don't know if it's called the MCAT then—but the medical aptitude test—I scored high enough that I got a letter from two schools—the University of Illinois was one of them, and Western Michigan was another one—telling me that my scores were high enough that they would be willing to consider me on probation because I was coming from an unaccredited school. And so they encouraged me to make application. Now the day I got the letter from the dean—we didn't have emails then and cell phones, so it had to come by mail. The day I got the letter was that the application was due.

[48:00]

And I went to my advisor and he says, “Oh man.” He said, “Boy. Why couldn't this've been two days ago. We could've gotten this in.” So I felt sorry for myself, and I went and got my friends. And we went and started drinking beer to bemoaning the fact that I couldn't—that I couldn't get in. And I also think now, in terms of kids getting good advice, What would have happened had somebody said, “Pick up the telephone and call. And tell them you just got the letter. Could they give you a couple days to get the application in?” What a difference that might have made in my life. So good information is key for people with that. So yeah, I thought Rust did very well with that. Quite a few of the ministers—at least at that time—in the Methodist Church—Black Methodist Church—AME, African Methodist [Episcopal Church]—quite a few of them went to schools like Rust.

[49:00]

And so they were college—they were college grads. So I think maybe it reached its goal. Yeah. Now, Rust, like a lot of other private schools—particularly black private schools—fell on hard times after. And when the federal government so they'd begin putting more money into public school, a lot of private schools began to—began to suffer.

All: So how did you handle to transition to college life?

Payne: Well I said I had been in Piney Woods, and so I had been accustomed to being away from home. I had been accustomed to having to study on my own. I did not find college life, academically, to be that big of a problem. Now at Piney Woods, we were pretty well controlled in terms of dating. The girls—there were other girls there—but we'd only talk to them, like, about a half-hour a day.

[50:00]

So then socially I had to make some adjustments to that. I wasn't used to being that free, you know, with this. And so my first quarter there—well I won't tell you my grades, but [laughs] I knew that if I didn't improve, I wasn't gonna be there much longer. [laughs] And I—and my dad—I have to give him credit—he says, “I hope you,” he says, “I hope you learned your lesson in that.” And we kind of laughed. He says, “You're a much better student than this.” And I know that. He said, “But if you don't study, if you don't go to class,” he said, “you can't live up to your potential.” He said, “Take everything over again.” And I did, and I did well from—from there. So, academically, it wasn't that big of a—but socially, I had to—had to make some adjustments to that, yeah.

All: What kind of things were you involved in on campus?

[51:00]

Payne: I was class president for my freshman year and my sophomore year. I was involved in the Student Government, and just a number of clubs—Science Club, and a number of things like this. Now Rust was a small school—only like five hundred students. So it didn't have the number of things like you would have here at Ball State to get involved. But most of—most of the organizations—we had what was called the MSM, which stands for Methodist Student—MSM—the Methodist Student Movement, which was, uh, was an activity on Sunday afternoon. Religious-based, where we'd go over and play games and do songs, and, you know different things of this.

[52:00]

But—but just social—in the Student Government, class—class leader, different things like that.

All: Were you involved in the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee? SNCC?

Payne: That was—see I was in school from—I graduated in '62. Those organizations, SNCC and all of those, really were kind of like later. Kind of like after—after that. I was involved—at Rust, we have—sitting in the theater—in the theater, and a couple of other things. But a lot of the Freedom Riders, a lot of that was after I was in college.

All: Okay. So you graduated from Rust with a degree in chemistry, correct?

Payne: Right.

All: At that point, were you still on track to become a doctor?

Payne: Yeah. Yeah.

All: Um-hm.

[53:00]

Payne: As I said, I was put on a waiting list. On a waiting list. And I got a teaching job at home. And surprisingly, I enjoyed teaching. And I was doing well. I mean, I had a passion for working with kids. In Philadelphia, the area is a high poverty area. And I had a passion for working with kids in poverty. And I was doing well with them, and kind of enjoyed it. Now, when I did—when Meharry did say, “Hey, we can take you. There’s a—there’s a spot for you,” I had gotten married for the first time and had a son—child on the way, then. So I couldn’t really quit and go back to—go back to med school. And so I just continued—continued teaching.

[54:00]

I have a National Science Foundation scholarship to go to Tuskegee. And then I went there during the summer. And while I was there, I was offered an academic year and stay and work on my master’s. And I did that. And then when I got back to home, I was there, I think, a half year. And then I was offered a chemistry position at Mississippi Valley State College with that. And so that’s how I didn’t get back to—to med school. I enjoyed teaching. I really don’t regret—it’s a story I tell, but I really don’t regret it. I’ve enjoyed what I’ve done other than that. Yeah.

All: That’s good. So then, how long was it did—after you graduated from Rust that you went to Tuskegee?

Payne: The following year. I graduated from Rust, I think, in August, when I started teaching. The following year I went—I started at Tuskegee that following summer.

[55:00]

All: Um-hm.

Payne: I started at Tuskegee because—well, I don't know if you looked up the history of the National Science Foundation, but, you know, the National Foundat—Science Foundation was an attempt for Americans to create more scientists, because we had gotten behind Russia. You know, and so the science teacher, but then—but going to summer school is also a nice way that science teachers could make extra money, because you got paid to go back, you know. But aside from that, I wanted to be the very best teacher for my students that I could possibly be. And so I went back basically because of that.

All: And then Tuskegee has a very rich history from, like, the Tuskegee Airmen, and the university was actually founded by Booker T. Washington. So did that impact your decision to go there at all?

[56:00]

Payne: Not—not really. I went there because I was accepted—I was accepted to, like, two or three places on the National Science Foundation. And Tuskegee was the closest to me. And the University of Oklahoma was one. And I'd never been there for [laughs] for a moment in my life, you know, and so—part of it—you go to Tuskegee because at that time, Tuskegee—it still is—a very prestigious school among African Americans, you know. So I'd never—I'd been there to visit—'cause I'd never been there as a student. And so, that was part of—to go there as the prestige of having gone and said I had gone there.

All: And what was it like there?

Payne: Oh, it was fun. It was very academic. Uh, a lot of the professors—I'd never had that many professors who all had Ph.Ds.

[57:00]

Quite demanding. Quite challenging. That was the VA Hospital that was in Tuskegee. You have to keep your mind—in Tuskegee, there were actually two Tuskegee's. There's Tuskegee Institute, which is where the school is, and then there is another Tuskegee that surrounds it. And when we were there, they called it Black Tuskegee versus White Tuskegee. So there was White Tuskegee as well. There was also a VA Hospital, was there. Now I don't know if you've heard of the syphilis studies that was done in Alabama. That's where it was done—it was done in that—in that hospital that were there. And there were black medical doctors there. And so I saw professional people—professional black—that I had never seen before.

[58:00]

Professional electricians, professional engineer—they also had a veterinarian school that was there. So I saw a lot of professional people that I'd never seen before. Now I have to tell you, this is kind of a joke. When we were at Tuskegee, we knew nothing about the Tuskegee Airmen. Their field where they practiced was out there, but we didn't know why it was there. It was a good place to go out and sit and drink beer, you know. Now—and I was back with my son in Birmingham at the hospital there. And we went back last summer with this—now it's a museum. And it's really nice—very well done. Very, very nice. And all I had to do was just kind of like glare. But to think when I was there [laughs] we had no clue. [laughs]

[59:00]

All: Did you—were you involved in any sort of civil rights protests or things at—while you were there?

Payne: The Selma to Montgomery March happened while I was there. I was not in the march itself, but when they finally got to Montgomery, there were a lot of people that went to meet them. I was one of—one of those. I can't say I was that involved. I was not in the actual march itself, only in as part of "Yeah, yeah, I made it." [laughs]

All: What was the overall atmosphere like?

Payne: Oh, it was exhilarating in a sense of accomplishment. And also, there was a sense of fright, too. A sense of what's gonna happen as a result of this, particularly to try to drive home, you know, these sort of things.

[1:00:00]

So it was exhilarating. It was a sense of accomplishment, you know, that it happened. And also sadness because you could hear of things that had happened, you know, to people on the way over on the bridge and things.

All: Did you notice any immediate impact of President Johnson's Civil Rights Act of 1964?

Payne: There were—yeah. There were some, but begrudgingly. There were some. For instance, businesses that were initially refused to serve you had to suddenly start serving you, even though they didn't want to. They may be hostile toward you—angry toward you. Motels had to suddenly start letting you, you know, rent a room from them. All those things was almost very interesting.

[1:01:00]

There were people who refused—who refused to do it. I remember I was going from Mississippi to Atlanta, and there was a place—it was called Mayhew's Junction, Mississippi. And I had been through Mayhew's Junction several—there was a truck stop there. It was—you could get gas, but there was also a café where you could get a sandwich. Now as a black person, I couldn't go in that café. No matter how good the hamburgers smell, you couldn't go in there and get one of them. So I stopped at the service station to gas up, and it occurred to me, Hey, wait a minute. I can go in and get me a hamburger now, you know. And so I went in, and as I walked in, the guy behind the counter, he called me and said, "What do you want?" And I said, "I would like to get a hamburger." He says, "You can't get a hamburger here." And I said, "The law said—" I said, "That's changed."

[1:02:00]

"Civil Rights Law says I can come in here." He said, "That Civil Rights Law is in Washington D.C. You in Mayhew Junction, Mississippi." And there was a glass counter in front of it. And as he was talking, I happened to look down. And he had a double barrel shotgun in that counter that was pointed right at me. And all I could do was say, "Yeah, you're right." [laughs] And backed out. I didn't get my hamburger. It was worth—So on the one hand, there were places that tried to respond instantly. There were some that did it very begrudgingly. There were a lot of them that went out of business before they would do it. So, yeah, that was pretty quick on the surface. But beneath it there was a lot of anger.

All: So why did you go into science education?

Payne: Well I said I wanted to go into medicine, you know.

[1:03:00]

And when I became a teacher, to get a master's degree in education because—I enjoyed teaching. That's what I wanted to do. So I switched from what people say the peer—apply to education because that's where I wanted to—wanted to be. I enjoyed science as well, but I wanted to be a science teacher. Integration happened so quickly. The first year I started teaching, I had no clue that integration was as close as it—it was. So I had seen myself working with black kids. Working with poverty. And I enjoyed working with those kind of—this is where I had said, "Hey. This is where I'm gonna be. I was at home, you know. This is where I'm probably gonna be for the rest of my life—is doing this."

All: When did you meet your wife?

Payne: My second wife.

All: Um-hm.

Payne: Okay. [laughs]

All: Okay. Sorry.

[1:04:00]

Payne: I got—I got divorced in '65. And I was teaching at Mississippi Valley State College. Then I went to graduate school at the University of Virginia, and I met my wife then. 1970. There as a—as a graduate student. And I guess many relationships—it was more of an accident, you know. She was in the apartment complex where I lived, with a fella—not with him—but she had some friends that had been to a wedding, because they had gotten ready. And the wedding party was at this friend's apartment that was a couple of doors over from me. And I heard the noise and everything, so I decided to go over and see what they were—what they were doing. And I went over, and that's where I met her. And probably what kept the relationship going—her last name was Payne also, spelled the same way, you know.

[1:05:00]

Because—well I said, “So we got to get together, and, you know, and pursue this name a little bit—little bit further with this.” And so she kind of laughed. She said, “Yeah.” You know. [laughs] So she told her—I think she told her dad that she met me, a Payne, because her dad was interested, too. “Where's his people? Who are his people?” I said, “Well look.” I said, “I got to meet your dad.” Well anyway, it just started from [laughs] started from that.

All: Nice. So you said you met her while you were at University of Virginia. What made you want to go to the University of Virginia?

Payne: One, it was known as a—as a good school. And I can't think—I had a friend, maybe, that suggested that I might have wanted to.

[1:06:00]

I think they had a top science ed program. At the time—at that time, I think Harvard had the number one science ed program. Virginia was number two. I think Ohio State was number three with this. I didn't quite convince myself that I wanted to try to go to Harvard, but I thought maybe UVA, I would try that, you know. And so—I liked what I heard about the university, its programs, and all that. And not only that—it was friendly toward African Americans as well. And remember I'm right on the edge of when African Americans begin to go to schools like that.

All: In recent years, only about six percent of students that go to University of Virginia are African American. What were the demographics like when you went there?

[1:07:00]

Payne: You know, I can't really give you very specific numbers. There were few—very few of us in graduate school. The law school, it seems to me, the law school may have had a higher percentage of African Americans of any of the professional schools. I'm not sure how many was in the medical school at that time. The undergrad—there seemed to have been a few more. As a graduate student, I didn't know a lot of the undergraduates. It seemed to have been a lot more undergrads, maybe, than the percentage of graduates. The percentage of graduates then, we were really pretty small at that time.

All: What was it like transitioning from a black college to being the minority at the school?

Payne: One of the biggest problems that I had was—and see I went from the Deep South to—well it depends.

[1:08:00]

Virginians don't like to be called Southerners. [laughs] So I went from the bottom of the south to the top [laughs] of the south. And so, one of the bigger problems that I had was dialect. Language. That I had to really work—because up to this point, I had been mostly in African American communities, African American schools, and things, where I could speak the black dialect or whatever you—and even in writing with that. So my—the biggest problem I had to overcome was really dialect and communication. Using phrases that my white colleagues didn't understand—didn't know what I was talking about. And so that was the biggest part—the biggest adjustment for me.

All: How was the school itself different from the other schools that you had went to?

[1:09:00]

Payne: I really didn't find it that big of a difference there, because a lot of the professors I had at Tuskegee—many of them had gone to University of Michigan. Some of them Ivy League schools. And so they were quite demanding themselves over there. So the demand—plus, usually—I can say I've always been a pretty hard worker. So working hard, reading a lot, really didn't bother me to have to do that. As a matter of fact, I would happily do it because it felt like it had meaning to it, as opposed to just doing it on my own. I'm not expected to—to do this. So, uh—

All: Did you face any sort of discrimination while you were there?

Payne: No. I can say honestly that I didn't.

[1:10:00]

All: Were there—uh, sorry. What do you remember about when Martin Luther King was assassinated?

Payne: I was teaching at Mississippi Valley State College during that time. And we had a bowling league. And I was at the league. I was bowling. And it came over the public announce—public system that he had been shot. And you know the expression, You could hear a feather fall. I mean, people just stopped and went down when that—when that happened, with that. And then it came out later on that he had died from that. And then protests—people angry—began.

[1:11:00]

One kid threw a bowling ball through the glass there. And so we were saying, What good is this gonna do? It's not gonna bring him back, you know. Whoever did this, this is not gonna hurt—so we had to really work with the students—keep them from tearing up out of anger—out of protest. And there was a lot of concern. Who's gonna be the leader? What are we gonna do now with this? So that was great concern.

All: Okay. So you earned your doctorate in science education. How has your college education impacted your life?

Payne: You know, I hear people ask the question now, "Is it too expensive to go to college?" And I say, "Boy. Be careful how you answer that question."

[1:12:00]

"The answer is No." I'm a firm believer that education is what makes a difference in your life. Without an education—again I've told people, "You know, I don't think Ball State hired me because I'm black. I think they hired me because I had an education. Because I had a doctorate degree." In terms of that. So I think that education itself has made the world of difference for me.

All: Did you begin working at Ball State immediately after you graduated?

Payne: From University of Virginia?

All: Um-hm.

Payne: Yeah, that was my first job. First and only job, actually.

All: Um-hm.

Payne: After I left—left there. Again I was in science education. Now, multicultural education—this is what I did at Ball—when I came. That's what I was hired to do. That was a new concept. People had no clue as to what—as to what that was.

[1:13:00]

And I remember with a friend, we were getting ready to graduate, and we both were in science ed. And we were over at the placement center looking at positions on the bulletin board. And I was looking at—well he said, "What are you doing? What do you find so interesting?" And I said, "Ball State University wants somebody to start and develop a multicultural program." He just broke out laughing. He said, "Man, you don't know anything about [laughs] multicultural education." And I said, "They don't either." [laughter] Because I knew that that was a new term—that I had just seen that. And plus, I had had a relative from Gary who had gone to Ball State. So I knew Ball State a little bit in terms of a teacher ed school. And I was interested in teacher education with that. And so that's what led me to apply here.

[1:14:00]

All: So what was the—what was your actual position when you started here.

Payne: I was an Assistant Professor in the Department of Adult Higher and Community—and they've changed the name since then. But I was also Director of the Multicultural Program in Secondary Ed, which was a brand new—brand new program at that time. So I was hired specifically to develop that program—to start that program.

All: Okay. And how would you describe the culture of Ball State when you started working here?

Payne: You know, I think there are two ways when you—to mean when you hire—there's the institution itself, and then there are the people within the institution itself. Uh, the institution itself was acceptable. I think there were efforts—there were people who thought that I was only hired because the federal government made Ball State hire me.

[1:15:00]

And so there was some resistant rejection of me based on that. They thought I had been forced—I had been forced on them. But the people within the department—particularly my department chair at the time, made the difference for me, in terms of my feeling welcome and wanting to be—wanting to be here, you know. You know, as an example, the first class that I—that I had, it would end at about nine-

fifty, you know. And—which is different. Now times ended differently. But as I would leave my classroom, there were always two fellas that were just going to get a cup of coffee and wanted to know if I wanted to go with them.

[1:16:00]

And sometime I would, sometime I wouldn't. But I'd always ask, Boy it's always interesting how they can be in the same spot almost, it looked like, daily when I go out. And so finally, two of my white students in my class told the two fellows—said, "We want to talk to you." He said, "You know," he said, "there are two white guys that keep asking us about you. Do you know what you're doing? Do you know what you—?" And I described them. And they said, "Yeah." I said, "Okay, I know who that is," you know. So it came tonight, I finally put it together, I said, "They're standing outside the door listening to me—to me teach." That's why they in the same spot all the time when I leave. And so the next day I went to class, I left the door open deliberately. And then as I started having class, I was talking and I went over as if I was looking for something to close the door.

[1:17:00]

And as I reached out to get the door, I looked and there they were, standing there listening, right there. And so I knew then, I said, "Well they're listening to me." So I have a choice. Do I need to get mad? Do I yell at them and all of this? Or as I said, I says, "Look. Stand on out there. You may learn something." [laughter] So rather than getting angry with them, I just said, "Hey. Here's my opportunity," you know, that I'm not teaching white kids to be disrespectful. So I was teaching multicultural ed, which was knew. People didn't know what they were. They thoughts I was trying to make radicals out of people. They were afraid that I was going to have protests on campus and just all kinds of things that were—were going on with it. Now about four or five years later, one of the two guys that were having—actually having coffee—we were talking.

[1:18:00]

And he was acknowledging his concern, when I first came, about me. And I said, "Well how long," I said, "When did you change your opinion about this?" And he said, "Well," he says, "You know after four or five years, I just kept listening to you—your talking. And I didn't see where you were making any mistakes in anything with this." And I didn't say anything. And I said, "After five years?" And he said, "Yeah." He never picked up that I'm thinking, Damn. Five years. That boy, I tell you that's a long time for a person to have to walk the line. [laughs] For you to finally decide that they were okay, you know. So the institution itself had some—had some problem with that. But there were good people. There were some good people here. And that's what I learned to look for—would look for the people that wanted me here, that wanted to help me

advance what I wanted to do. And I just kind of avoided and stayed away from the people that were kind of in the way.

[1:19:00]

All: So, those two guys who were listening, were they other faculty members, or were they—?

Payne: Yeah. They were faculty members. Yeah.

All: Okay.

Payne: Yeah. Now I may add, too, is that both of them really became real good friends. They got to know me, and this is, you know, part of the learning is what happens when people get to know each other. They knew nothing about black people. They knew no black person before. All they knew was what they had heard. And they were assuming that the federal government had made Ball State hire me. And they weren't the only ones. There were a lot of—a lot of people. And there was a rumor that I was being paid more than other professors. With—as a result of that, there were some professors who didn't want to cooperate with me, because well, if he's being paid more, let him work harder, you know—other than that.

[1:20:00]

There was a professor in one of the other departments in TC [Teachers College] who called me one day. And this is a woman, and she said, "I'd like to have lunch with you, if you don't mind." I said, you know, "I'll go." Into the lunch, she said, "I wanted to tell you." She said, "When you were hired to start the multicultural program, I was really happy and wanted you to do that." She said, "But I had heard that you were being paid more than the rest of us." She said, "I decided I wasn't going to help you with this." I said, "So what changed your mind?" She said, she kept—she said, "My conscience kept bothering me, like 'I should be helping him. I should do what I can to help him.'" And she said, "Well okay. Suppose he is making more than the rest of us. How much more is he—is he making?" Now you can find any professor's salary you want to if you want to go to the trouble to do it. And I think at that time, they kept professor's salaries in the—in the president's office. And she went over and asked to see the list of—list of salaries.

[1:21:00]

And what she found out is that I was making less than most professors there, because at that time, Ball State had a salary schedule. And depending on your experience, and that, that's what you got. In other words, I was not paid any more than anybody else who came in with that. So—and then she saw that, and she

began to try to put that—to put that out that I wasn't being paid more than the other people.

All: We've learned a lot about the—Ball State's salary schedule and how that's changed over the years. Have you always seen that as sort of a fair deal?

Payne: You mean changing that?

All: Yeah.

Payne: Yeah. Yeah. Even though I've—you mean going from the salary system to the merit—to the merit system?

All: Um-hm.

[1:22:00]

Payne: Even though I've had some questions about the merit system with this, I—I thought we were getting more like other universities and things, with it. So I wasn't—I wasn't that—and again, I had said that if it's a fair system, I'll do okay. That was my belief. Now if it's a political system or if it's based on something else, I may not do too well. But if it's—if it's a matter of competition, doing my work, doing a good job, teaching my classes, doing that, I said I don't have any problems with—don't have any problems with that. But yeah, so—I really wasn't that—that worried about it.

All: Okay. So when you started here, the Multicultural Education Program was fairly new. How did you help shape the goals of the program?

Payne: I had to insist that this was a program about multicultural groups, not just African Americans.

[1:23:00]

I fell out with a lot of the few African Americans here. I fell out with a good many of them, because that's what they wanted it to be. They thought it would be a black pro—I said, "No. We have a black history program in the history department." I said, "This is multicultural education. This is not black education. It includes black education." But I just had to insist that this is what it's about. I also had to insist that multicultural education is about how you teach people. So I had strong influence on teaching strategies, contact, inclusion of people within what we—what we teach. It just wasn't a series of stories. It wasn't just history. History's important, but it had to be beyond. So it became an application of that.

[1:24:00]

But I think by insistence that—two things: one is it's not an African American program, and it's also not an intercity program. So that was my biggest struggle, was getting people away from those two—two concepts. Is that multicultural education is about upper income people as much as it is about lower income. Because as teachers, you need to understand all of those different groups. And in particular, what happens when you bring them together, you know. So I think that was the biggest—that was the biggest struggle. And being African American, a lot of people didn't believe me when I would—when I would say, "This is about other groups as well." And I would have students say, "But—you know, we've had your class, but it seems that when you talk about African Americans you were more excited." I said, "Well I didn't mean to." I said, "But I've been an African American all my life. That's a group I know."

[1:25:00]

[laughs] And so I may talk about them with a lot more confidence than I do about other. And so when I talk about African Americans, my culture, I know that, and I do have a lot more confidence sometimes in that than perhaps I do in some of the other cultures.

All: So when you started working here, did you expect to work here for as long as you did?

Payne: You know, growing up and watching my dad and other people—doing a good job meant that you stayed with it for a long time. So on the one hand, I thought that if I do a good job, maybe I'll be here for—be here for a while. But that never really came into my mind, because I was more concerned about doing a good job than—than leaving.

[1:26:00]

Now there were times, though, that I've thought, Hey. Been here for a while. I kept thinking, you know, Maybe I missed the boat. And maybe I should have looked around for some other things to—little things to do. But no, I—my wife said, now—she can't believe we're still here. [laughs] So I never really questioned how long I was gonna be here. But I just—I'd just tried to do my job. Now I have to admit, my first quarter here—when I came, I was given a program that had been approved by the University Senate. And it said that I could start the multicultural program in the spring quarter. We were on the quarter system then.

[1:27:00]

And so I had two quarters to, uh, get students to volunteer for the—for the program. And I had been told by professors that, Boy, you're gonna have a hard time getting students who want to be in a multicultural program. Because we don't get a lot of students from Gary—and a lot of the urban students. Most of our

students are white, and they come from places like Ligonier, Wawasee, and all these places—and they're not gonna be interested in a multicultural program. So I got a little concerned. I told my wife, I said, "People are telling me I can't start this program here." And she says, "So what are you gonna do?" I said, "Well, I'm kind of hung here for the next nine months anyway." And I said, "I got to make this look good for nine months." I said, "Because when you start looking for another job, the people aren't gonna ask you how bad was the job. What they're gonna ask you is how well did you do on it."

[1:28:00]

"They don't want to know how bad it was and that—so I got to make this look good for a while." So I decided to stop talking to professors about stuff—the multicultural—because they weren't gonna be in it anyway. Over in the Student Center, now I don't know what they call it now, but it used to be called the Tally-Ho, you know. And so, students would go in there and they play cards and do different stuff. At that time, believe it or not, I was a lot younger than I am now. So I would go in and I would play cards with them. And a lot of them thought I was a student, you know. And then as I would get to know them, I'd ask them about what were they majoring in. And at that time, quite a few of them were teacher ed majors. And I would tell them about, you know, multicultural ed. I'm starting this new program. I said, "Why don't you come over and hear me talk about and explain?" So I would go to Tally-Ho. I would go to LaFollette. LaFollette also had a commons area.

[1:29:00]

I'd go over and I would talk to students there. And so then I started putting up posters that I wanted to meet about the multicultural program. Now this was the first quarter I was here. And by mid-quarter, I had enough students that they were ready to join the pro—I had about thirty-five students who were ready to sign up right then. Ready to—ready to go. And so I was able to start the program the second quarter I was here rather than the third quarter I was here. Most of the students were from Ligonier, Wawasee, [laughs] all of the places that people had said that they wouldn't be interested. That's where they were—that's where they were—they were from, you know. And at that time, it was a little bit more difficult, actually, to attract some of the African American students—there'd been a few that were here—because they were assuming that this program is about African Americans and Why do I need to know about African Americans.

[1:30:00]

So I had to work a little harder to get, actually, some minority students in the program than I did the white students.

All: And did the University help you advertise and, sort of, get students interested in it?

Payne: Oh yeah. Yeah. The University is where I'm saying people—people made the difference. The Dean, the department chair. Burkhart Building—Dr. Burkhart was the Provost at the time that I was here. Now there is a policy—I still think it's a policy now, I don't know what the number—but then, in order to have a class—for class to go, you had to have at least ten students in it. I don't know what it is now. But as I started the program, some people were freshmen; some were sophomores—different people. And I had a junior year class that I needed to offer, but I only had eight students who were juniors to go into that class.

[1:31:00]

And so I didn't quite have enough to make a class. So I went to the department chair and told him, and I said this is—I said, "Look. If I don't offer this class to the people going through it—if they find out that they get to this point and then have to stop, they can't," I said, "It's not gonna help me." And so he said, "Yeah, you're right." So he called the Dean. He said, "I can't approve that." So he called the Dean, told the Dean about it. And the Dean said, "Yep. You're right." And he said, "I can't approve it either, so you got to go talk to Dr. Burkhart." Well they called him Rich, so you got to go call to talk to Rich. And people were afraid of Dr. Burkhart for some reason. And his secretary—I thought he was gonna come over and talk to him, but his secretary called and made an appointment for me to come talk to him. [laughs] So I said, "Okay." So I went over, and I told him the situation. And he looked at me, and he said, "Charles." He said, "We hired you here to start this program." Said, "If we didn't intend to help you, we shouldn't have hired you."

[1:32:00]

And he picked up the phone and he called his secretary. Said, "Call the Dean and tell him to let Charles have his—have his course." And then I found out why people were afraid of him. His voice changed, and he said, "And tell him, don't—give Charles whatever he needs and don't call me over here any more about this." [laughs] When I got back to the building—I walked from the Ad [ministration] Building to TC. When I got back to the building, the word had already gotten there, that Dr. Burkhart had said, "Get Charlie whatever he wants." [laughter] And so, yeah, the institution helped me quite a bit to do whatever I—and that's what I'm saying. The people made the difference. The institution may not have, but the people—there were good people along the way that helped.

All: So how has the university changed in the forty-one years that you worked here?

Payne: Oh, physically and student-wise.

[1:33:00]

When I came, the diversity and multicultural ed is nothing. I suspect that very few people—very few places—very few programs on this campus where diversity isn't an issue. I don't mean a bad issue, but a concept that people try to study. People try to bring in with this. Trying to recruit minority faculty and minority students and all this is big-time business. It's hard because everybody in the country is trying to do, you know, trying to do the same thing. So I think the attitude on the part of a lot of people has changed quite a bit. I think the community itself has become a lot more open to it. When I came, believe it or not, there were still apartments—we've had nearly the number of apartments then as you have now. There were still apartments in places where black people couldn't live—couldn't rent. There were some organizations where black people could not go into.

[1:34:00]

I remember the Elks Club—I don't know, are you from Muncie?

All: Unh-uh.

Payne: There's a Elks Club outside of here, and my department chair—this was the first year I was here—the department had had a retreat at this—the retreat, it was a Sunday afternoon dinner, really. Out together with this. And as my wife and I walked—approached the door, I saw this guy come up to the door and do something to it. But I really wasn't sure what he did. And as I got to the door, I tried to open it and it was locked. And then I kept—with the door—trying to open it. And as I was opening it, he'd close it. I had opened it and he closed it. And finally my department chair saw us. He didn't quite know what was going on, but he saw it. And he came up and he asked the guy, he said, "What's wrong?" Says, "He's with us." Said, "He can come in." And he said, "No, he can't. Not in here you can't." And the department chair said, "Well, if he can't come in, the rest of us are leaving."

[1:35:00]

And that changed that, right. So I don't think—you wouldn't find that here now. They may not want you, but at least they wouldn't be there pulling the door [laughs] back and forth. So it's—it's changed quite a bit. But there's a number of professors now—try to do diversity-related things in their class. As you look at Code Red—I don't know if you go to athletics or not. But you look at Code Red, the cheerleaders and all that, you see a—not totally diverse—but you see that group—diverse group there. One year that I was here—a couple years I was here—there was a protest from the white girls that they wanted someone else to be cheerleaders other than blondes.

[1:36:00]

So there weren't even any brunettes that were [laughs] were—it was just something I had not noticed, you know, until one of the students was telling me—telling me about that. So a lot of things like that have changed.

All: Okay. So tell me about your experience with the Office of Institutional Diversity. When did that come about?

Payne: Well, that really is recent. Dr. King—Terry King, who's provost now. When he came, he put together a—and that was one of his first or second questions when he came, was about diversity. And at that time, I was in—it was called, uh, I changed the name on it I forgot the old name—the Office of Diversity or something like this.

[1:37:00]

And he wanted to know what was that about. So he had an interest in it when he first came. So he put together the committee and he had several questions. And he said, now, "Give me about three or four things that I can do on this campus to make a difference." And one of them was to appoint an assistant provost for diversity, and then also an office of Institute. Well it was an office—I can't think of the name—diversity. And I named it Institutional Diversity, but he did—so it actually came out of his office that this is—so the whole idea behind the Office of Institutional Diversity as I had it—now there's a different director who may have a different perception of that. But as I saw it, my job was to encourage people to do diversity, to assist in recruitment of faculty, but more than anything was to try to coordinate all of the things that by now—and see we're like twenty-five years or thirty years later.

[1:38:00]

Now, there are a lot of the programs—a lot of things in diversity that are going on, but they were disjointed from each other. So one of the things I tried to do in the Institute was to try to bring things together. Some kind they were duplicating what they were doing and working together. So that's what I saw is the big—is my big task. It was—was trying to do that, and to encourage the institution to do things. For instance, the Martin Luther King Memorial Concert, you know, was an idea—an idea of mine. So I—because I was listening to—I was during Martin Luther King Day.

[1:39:00]

I was listening to the radio, and there was a program out of Atlanta that I was listening to, where the Morehouse Choir, which is a black school, and the Spelman Choir were having a tribute to Martin Luther King there. And the

schools, and the bands, and the choir had come together. And I said, "Gee, I really like that." And I said, "Ball State's a university, why can't we do that?" And so that's where the idea of the—of the memorial concert came—now the school of music had—it was a little bit different from what I had hoped that it would be, but it's still good. They still—they still have it.

All: And when did—when did you, like, suggest that idea?

Payne: Probably seven—eight years ago. It's, yeah.

All: Okay. In terms of your career at Ball State, what accomplishment are you most proud of?

[1:40:00]

Payne: I think just the overall impact that—that I think I was able to do here, in terms of getting people to see multicultural ed, diversity, as a positive thing and not as a negative thing. I think—to me, that's—it's unfortunate that when people hear diversity, they immediately think conflict. Now, you can make it conflict if you want to, but if you're talking about racism, prejudice, that's only a small part of what diversity is all about. Diversity is what makes us human, you know. And I think they could be fun to talk about those differences as opposed to conflicting with each other. And so I hope that I've left people with a positive attitude toward what it is as opposed to the fact that it always has to be conflict—that people always have to be at each other's throats about what's going to happen.

[1:41:00]

And people are always being threatened. And I just hope that that is a attitude that I have left here.

All: And then what does your family think about the legacy that you left at—?

Payne: They're quite proud. They're proud—proud of it. My son, as I mentioned, is in medicine. But he's also done some things in med school where he is at related to diversity. He put together a kind of a recruiting program. I think he said they had the highest number of minority—coming to—recruiting to do the internship residence. They had the highest percentage of minority that they'd ever had with this. And so he's interested—he wants to become—academic medicine—in academic medicine.

[1:42:00]

He wants to work in a med school, you know, and I think he'd like to—to do something related to minorities and diversity with—with that. My daughter, in working with foster care, you know, is constantly talking about diversity, because

it used to be one time that you couldn't place minority students with white families and vice versa, but now that's not—that's not. So she's constantly in her group talking about different groups with this. And my wife in the—director of the Counseling, has started several diversity teams. In counseling they do quite a bit in diversity with this. So I think they've been quite supportive of it.

All: What changes do you expect is in the future of Ball State?

Payne: I don't know.

[1:43:00]

A lot of universities are going through great change, you know, with different—different things. I had hoped, and I had had this vision forty years ago when I came here, that diversity, or that the idea of diversity, would just become a natural part of what we do, and that maybe don't have to talk about it; people just do it with this. And I hope that one of these days they can get to that—get to that point. Now sometimes I think we expect things to happen probably too quick. We want it to happen in our lifetime. And I don't think it will. I used to tell my class that what we enjoy today is what somebody else wanted years ago. So what we would like to have today, we have to make that possible for somebody else in the future. So I think in the future, then, as we begin to get more minorities in administrative positions, more minorities with PhDs, that's gonna take time in order to be able to do that.

[1:44:00]

So sometimes I think we started asking questions, in terms of social change, probably too quick. If people asking me, "Have we reached the Martin Luther King dream?" And I said, "I don't know. Maybe it's too soon to ask that question." I certainly think we're on our way there, so—what the university will be like in the future, I think, is the question with that. Diversity is gonna have to be a part of that, because look at the demographics in America. Look who's going into kindergarten. And most kindergarten classes now, there's at least forty to fifty percent—sixty percent minority kids. They grow up, you know, twenty years later, that's who's gonna be coming out, you know, in terms of that.

[1:45:00]

And so I think diversity is gonna have to be a part of—a part of that. You can tell it was time for me to retire, you know, but I look at the number of online classes and things. I said, "Now, with the number of people that are taking online classes, and we're still building new residence halls, what's wrong with this picture?" [laughs] So maybe it's time for me to—[laughs]. So I don't know what the new university is gonna look like. Money is gonna become—at least from the state—gonna become scarcer. Corporations now like to create their own data, and

everything. So they may not be as willing to fund universities with that. And so I really don't know what the trend—what's going to be. I think it's gonna be changed, though.

[1:46:00]

All: And then what sort of advice would you give to black students pursuing higher education?

Payne: I think it's a—it's a worthy thing to pursue. If you want to change society, I think you're gonna have to do it through—through education. Of course, [elevator bell rings] the question that always comes up: How much money can I make? Well it really kind of depends on the degree and how hard you want to work. There are people in higher ed who make pretty good. If you consider being a president of a university as ed, some of those guys make it pretty good, you know. I don't know what this president makes, but President Gora was in the neighborhood of what, four hundred fifty thousand? Something like that. That's not bad, you know. And then along the way up there are some good positions with that.

[1:47:00]

And so, I think the good thing is, is that, if President Obama didn't do anything else, I think he removed the cloud that hung over minorities' heads. How high can I go? And I recall when I was in—when I was in college—and John Glenn made his first flight, which was kind of a half-orbit around the earth. I was in a physics class at that time, and only about fifteen of us in the class. And we watched that as much as we could on—on TV. And we were all excited that he had done it. And as we were leaving, one of the fellas said, "You know." He said, "Why are we so excited about this?" He said, "We're never gonna get to do that as black—we're never gonna get to be astronauts. We're never gonna be able to—to do that."

[1:48:00]

And so that—that hung that cloud over our head, that no matter how good we were in physics, no matter how much we loved physics, there was only so far that we were gonna be able to go with it. I think that cloud's gone now. And I think that African Americans and women have to be able to see that. It doesn't mean that you won't bump your head occasionally [laughs] with that, but there are ways to—I think that cloud is removed. And I think each year, particularly with this generation, that cloud recedes further and further back. So it's a matter of what are you willing to—to work for? In my church, we said, Miracles happen, but miracles are always wrapped in heart. Miracles don't come easily, you know. So—and so I think that people have to see that opportunities have to be dug out. You don't—very few people just wake up and—[claps] BOOM—it's that—you got to work for it.

[1:49:00]

You got to be willing to do that. And there are struggles and there are failures along the way. But you just got to be able to be persistent. Stick with it. Um-hm.

All: All right. Before we conclude, is there anything else you would like to share about your experience that we haven't gotten a chance to talk about yet?

Payne: No, I think we've covered, uh, covered much—much of it. I've enjoyed my—my years at Ball State working with students. Sometimes I wish that I had probably done more than maybe I did. But then on the other hand, you do what you do within the time frame. And so, maybe today I could do some things that I couldn't do fifteen years ago—ten, twenty years ago, you know, with it. But I've enjoyed my years here at Ball State.

[1:50:00]

I also tell people that—people say, "Well, you've been good for Ball State." And I say, "Yeah, and Ball State was good for me, too." You know, I came here from a black institution with this. And Ball State had to put up with me [laughs] as well as I had to put up with—put up with them, you know. So I appreciate that. And I've enjoyed my time. I have no regrets for having come, you know.

All: All right. Then on behalf of the Ball State University African-American Alumni Oral History Project, I'd like to thank you so much for all your hard work and participation.

Payne: Thank you for inviting me.

All: Yeah. Thanks.

[1:50:43]

End of interview